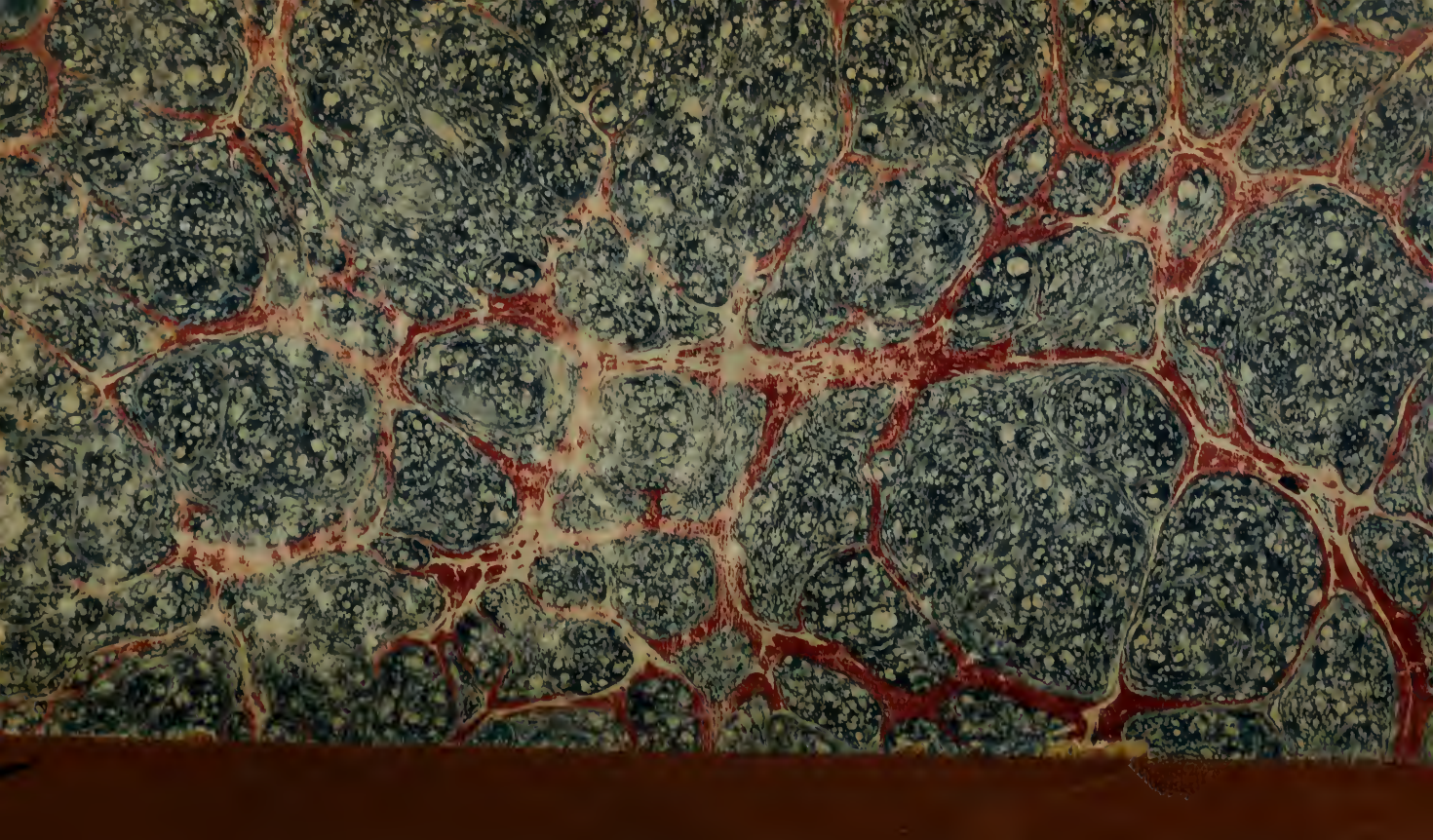

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THE WOMAN OF HONOR.

In THREE VOLUMES.

VOLUME III.

Letters bring things more home, and repreſent them more to the life, than either Annals or Lives.

BACON, *Lord* VERULAM.

LONDON,

Printed for T. LOWNDES, at N° 77, in Fleet-ſtreet;

And W. NICOLL, at N° 51, in St. Paul's Church-yard.

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MEMOIRS
OF A
WOMAN of HONOR.

VOLUME III.

LETTER XXVIII.

LAUNCELOT GREVILLE, *Esq*; *to the Marquess of* SOBERTON.

My Lord-Marquess, *Gloucestershire.*

YOUR letter has given me great pain, on more accounts than one. But let me reply to it in order, point for point, in the hopes that considering how essential most

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of the matters are which draw from me this answer, you will forgive its unconscionably exceeding all the common limits of a letter. It is then rather an epistolar pamphlet, that I am offering to you in virtue of that authority of friendly advice which you have not disdained to continue to me.

I am very sorry, though not at all surprised, at My-lord Duke's receiving no material benefit from the Spaw-waters. That Dr. Addle, in whom your father places so implicit a confidence, has, it seems, for a last resource, after he has done all the mischief he can to his patient's constitution by his prescriptions of worse than only ineffectual medicines, the rage of sending them to any waters that occur to his imagination,

without

without the ſhadow of reaſon or propriety.

I dare aver, that there can hardly a diſeaſe be named, to which the Spaw, muſt not, on the plaineſt rules of common-ſenſe, be more likely to be unfavorable than ſalutary. That many ſick have returned thence, with their diſorders diminiſhed, or even cured, I make no doubt, but not from any good that could be fairly attributed to the waters. They have, on thoſe occaſions, the merit of a victory to which they contributed nothing, nay, oftneſt obtained in ſpite of them; a circumſtance in common to them with many a phiſician, who boaſts of curing where he could not kill, though two againſt one, the diſeaſe and himſelf. A villainous marſhy ſitu-

ation, down in a vale, with an air confined by the surrounding mountains, and waters only the worse for their being impregnated with harsh metalline particles, not only difficultly assimilable, but so likely to throw their weight unfavorably into the ballance of the solids against the fluids, afford not one satisfactory reason why such a place should be recommendable for the recovery of health. Nor is this my opinion singular. The judicious *Rhedi*, who was one of the first of the phisicians, in these latter ages, that endeavoured to restore his art to the simplicity of nature, and endeavored it in vain, makes the following perfectly sensible remark on them.

"Those so much boasted mineral "waters, always leave in the human "body

" body a great part of their *mineral*
" *ſaburra*.'

Your Lordſhip, even without that tincture of natural philoſophy in which you ſo much delight, and with no more than the plain lights of reaſon, muſt eaſily conclude that ſuch particles, only the more pernicious for their minuteneſs, muſt make a dreadfull havock in the ſmall capillary veſſels, on which the great principles of life capitally depend, and into which the fluid in which they ſwim, compell the admittence of theſe hoſtile inmates. To old age, their deſiccative aſtringency muſt be highly injurious, and increaſe the obſtructions and rigeſcence already too natural to that time of life. Nor indeed do I conceive any age, or any diſtemper, in

which they can do other than harm, except perhaps in the ſoft relaxed ſiſtem of young children, or of girls eaten up with the green-ſickneſs; in granting which, I am not very clear, that I do not grant too much.

Sure I am, however, that ſome Noblemen of the firſt diſtinction, whoſe caſes were, I may ſay, palpably oppoſite to the preſcription of them, may be ſaid to have periſhed, or at leaſt, in all human probability, to have had their death accelerated by the uſe of them. If ever the light of a truly phiſical enquiry ſhould be carried into this ſubject, I have ſtrong reaſons to believe that theſe waters, and many other thermal, chalibeate, and mephitic, now in vogue in a medical intention, will be baniſhed into the

the wide and lamentable domains of chimera, together with the virtues of aſſes milk, of bezoar, of pearl, and that childiſh trick of Riverius, by which he got an eſtate, of the efferveſcence of lemon juice, ſaturated with ſalt of wormwood, and a multitude of other articles, worſe than only unſerviceable, which here is not the place to particulariſe to you.

It muſt ſurely give an alarming pain to humanity to think, that while the laws are ſo punctiliouſly attentive to the defence of property, they take ſo little care of preſerving that health without which there can be no enjoyment of property. Would any one believe, that the lives of the ſubjects ſhould be left expoſed, as they actually are, under

such insufficient guard, to credulity on one side, and to ignorance, or mercenary imposture, on the other? How easy, but especially how necessary a measure of state would that be, to erect a tribunal of magistrates of health, for the protection of that inestimable benefit of nature?

Who can remember, without shuddering with horror, that two of the highest class of life perished, not long since, under, and not quite impossibly, by such an infernal prescription as that of brown paper in milk, boiled away to a third, for a disorder, which it was more likely to give than to cure?

I could name to your Lordship one Nobleman, recently deceased, who had, long

long before his death, loſt the uſe of all his limbs, by his fatal liſtening to the promiſes of a quack, whoſe drug was rank poiſon. The tortures and murders by theſe falſe pretences are innumerable, while ſcarce a day paſſes without the boaſt of new ſpecifics, which, in ſpite of the averred proved inefficacy and perniciouſneſs of the old ones, ſtill find freſh bubbles and freſh victims.

Nor let me be ſo unjuſt as to impute excluſively to quackery and empiriciſm, miſchiefs from which the rational phiſic, as it is moſt falſely called, is itſelf far from exempt; the preſent theory of it, and eſpecially of the powers of the various articles of pharmacy, being ſo demonſtrably groundleſs and wrong, that a very eminent profeſſor of

the art said, with perfect justice, that he was the greatest physician who had the least faith in physic as it now stands. Another also, of a well-deserved reputation, confessed, he was in most cases more embarrassed about prescribing what should not hurt, than what could relieve the patient. In the present practice, the regulars prescribe upon a false judgment, the quacks upon no judgment at all; and it is of these last that mankind must questionless have the least bad bargain, if it be true, that the march of scientific error must be uniformly wrong; whereas, though the odds against any good from the blindness of ignorance are extremely great, it is not, however, impossible, that the round of chance may produce a happy hit.

In

In this age of dictionaries, a well-reaſoned *index expurgatorius*, or dictionary of the medicines that are not to be truſted to in the diſeaſes for which they are generally preſcribed, or indeed to be truſted at all, would not be an undeſirable work, and might help to atone for the thouſands of ſuperfluous or pernicious ones, with which the public is inceſſantly peſtered. Nor would the liſt be a ſhort one of the pretended remedies thoſe domeſtic traitors, taken into our ſervice on a falſe character, and infamous for their breaches of truſt to us at our greateſt need. In ſhort, nothing can hardly be more eſſential to mankind, than a new *rationale* of pharmacy, combined with a new theory of phiſic: both, as things are, being de-

monſtrably falſe, according to reaſon, and, what I hope no one will deny, according to experience.

I ſhould imagine, too, that whoever had power enough of perſuaſion to explode but a ſingle noxious article of our preſent common ſiſtem of diet, however generally received, or rather with the more reaſon for its being generally received, could hardly deſerve much leſs of univerſal ſociety, than thoſe fabled heroes of antiquity, who could have at beſt but the local temporary merit of delivering a country, or part of a country, from ſome wild beaſt, like that of Gevaudan, whoſe ravages muſt be incomparably leſs extenſive, leſs durable, and, perhaps, conſidering the torments and death accelerated by diſeaſes, intrinſically

ſically not more horrid. But even the hopes of ſuch a ſucceſs are denied by man to man, ever his own greateſt enemy, and ever more ready to be perſuaded to his harm than to his good. Slight and ridicule are probably but the leaſt cruel return that would await the attempt. A pleaſing, though pernicious habit of the palate will for ever carry it againſt the vain proteſt of the human ſtomach and conſtitution.

I return your Lordſhip many thanks for your effectual exertion in favor of Mr. Mowbray, whoſe ſuceeſs is the more unexpected for the juſtice of his claim. Beſides, he was in all reſpects too worthy a man not to deſpair of having any thing done for him. What ſhadow is there for merit to hope a recompence,

compence, either among those who do not know it, or among those who are hurt at it? Add, that by most of our pleasant Great, beneficence to men of real worth is considered in the repugnant light of a lawful demand; whereas, their serving fools has more the air of paying a gaming debt, to say nothing of the favorable circumstance of their being more congenial to them.

Mr. Mowbray, however, is perfectly sensible, that he owes to your private interest that success which was his due, from the public spirit of the Minister, if he had been capable of any, and has accordingly written to me in the terms of the utmost gratitude to your Lordship.

To your remarks on Penfions I need add nothing here, except that while the whole encouragement from the Government to Literature, or to uſeful talents, hardly amounts to a miſerable thouſand a year, that very Government ſuffers ſome hundreds of thouſands of the public money to be extorted from it by the pernicious influence, or the impudent worthleſſneſs of ſubjects, who never did their country five farthings worth of ſervice, nor are capable of it; which laſt circumſtance is, however, the only apparent reaſon for ſome of them thus quartered on it. This ſuggeſtion you will not think exaggerated, if you will yourſelf be at the pains to caſt up all the Penſions, Annuities, Reverſions, Sine-cures, or, what

is next to Sine-cures, offices of which the ſalaries and perquiſites are enormouſly diſproportioned to the public ſervice done for them, with all the various ſhapes into which the pillage of the nation is methodically put, and which the Dictionary of La Cruſca ſo emphatically and ſo juſtly calls *il pan di tradimento*, the bread of treaſon: that black bread, for which few are now ſo ſqueamiſh, as not to have an ever-open ſtomach. After all, is not that infamous avarice oftener than vanity itſelf, at the bottom of the rage of ſuch numbers to get a ſeat where they abundantly prove themſelves to have been leſs tempted by the honor of doing their duty to their country, than by what they project to get by betraying it? And this, like the chamber-

chambermaid's putting into a lottery, they call being in Fortune's way.

As to that low, beggarly levee-ſcene which you deſcribe, it has ſomething too ſhocking in it to be only ridiculous, when one conſiders that the great offices in this country, with all the numerous train of conſequences to its welfare, are villainouſly bought and ſold among perſonages ſo ſcandalouſly mean, as to deſcend to an attendance there, and to make circle to ſome worthleſs Miniſter, whoſe ſole title to ſuperiority over them, is his impudence to preſume it, on the ſtrength of a Court-favor, oftenеſt ſolely owing to his undertaking the ſacrifice of the national intereſt.

Who can forbear laughing, on reading occaſionally in the public papers, thoſe

thoſe moſt important pieces of intelligence, numerous Levies being held by little, trifling muſhroom-miniſters, whom, ſo far from not diſdaining to attend, a man of any ſpirit or taſte would think himſelf diſhonored or miſerable, if he was condemned to keep no better company?

This is one of the bleſſed effects of that new form of Government, which has crept into exiſtence, through the breach of our conſtitution, in reſting the whole power of the ſtate on the ſingle point, not of parliamentary influence over affairs, but of an undue influence over the Parliament itſelf, in favor of ſome view oppoſed to the intereſt of the nation, and often to that of the Court itſelf, too avaritious, or too ignorant to

ſee,

fee, that in ungratefully purfuing the detriment of that nation to which it was owing all its greatneſs, it was in fact implicitly ſeeking its own deſtruction.

The ſublime project of fleecing the people by Charles the Second, to ſupport the ſtupid libertiniſm of his court; or of William the Third's continental attachments, covered by the pretext of fruſtrating thoſe ſchemes of univerſal monarchy, which were by us ſo devoutly to be wiſhed for in Lewis the Fourteenth, the man on earth the leaſt likely to effectuate ſo frantic a chimæra; and laſtly, in the two late reigns, that ſiſtem, the moſt abſurd, the moſt cruel, the moſt ruinous for all parties, of everlaſtingly taking German troops into Britiſh pay; ſuch projects, I ſay, give you

you moſt plainly and moſt truly the whole foundations of that deteſted corruption, which, in time, not only brought on the national debt to the enormous point at which we now ſee it, but made of the Sovereign a kind of ſlave to any Miniſter, who, on the ſtrength of his intereſt to carry, by a majority in the Houſe of Commons, thoſe great truſtees of the burſal power, that capital court-point of draining the country of its cleareſt treaſures, and of plunging it over head and ears in debt, and into wars, which were the falſe pretext for creating and encreaſing that debt, might, in every other matter of ſtate, uſe him like a Negroe, nay worſe, like an accomplice in ſo foul a ſcheme.

By this means the royal authority fell debaſed and diſhonored into the hands

hands of ſome private ſubject, often odious to the Sovereign, but neceſſary to him in that criminal view, and whoſe truſty circle of agents, dependents, and ſubalterns, conſtituted an impudent oligarchy, which received the new and improper denomination of Miniſtry; among whom moſt commonly no one had ſo little intereſt as the Sovereign himſelf, who was compelled to continue them in his ſervice while their patron's power laſted in the Houſe of Commons, which was the ſole tenure of it at Court, and reduced the Sovereign, though certainly not without its being originally his own fault, to a difficulty of diſtinguiſhing which were his ſubjects and which his Miniſter's.

The following farce has often, my Lord, diverted me, not very good-naturedly

naturedly I confeſs, for the extreme dulneſs and folly of it; I mean the progreſs of a political adventurer, or the generation of a Miniſter out of the corruption of a Patriot.

A Member, eſpecially of the Lower Houſe, aſſembles others, lays before them pathetically the grievances of the nation. All he ſays is unfortunately but too juſt. Satisfied with the truth of his allegations, and deteſting the Miniſter of whoſe party they are not; and conſequently not in place, they chooſe this new opponent for their leader, and liſt under his banners. Soon his party increaſes: the public, whoſe good is the ſtate watch-word, and always credulous, though ſo often cheated, fortifies it with its voice. He is now in

paſs

pafs to gall a Miniftry, and fometimes to overfet it. In which laft cafe, the Court feels a neceffity of purchafing its peace of him; and its gates are fet open on the eafieft terms it can make. The ftipulation once concluded, in which the good of the nation has not the compliment paid to it of being fo much as mentioned, the conqueror fneaks in, and often drops his really beft friends, leaving them like footmen at the door, who might be aftonifhed at feeing him turn fo fhort, if the thing was not quite fo common: I call thefe his really beft friends, who have the honor of a fate in common with that of their facrificed country, in being left out of the villainous treaty. Thofe he takes in with him are rather worfe off, fince they fhare the infamy of deferting the public

caufe,

cauſe, an infamy not quite improperly compenſated by a poor temporary precarious poſt, which their eternally loſt character and influence, ſoon make it ſo eaſy to take from them without much ceremony or much conſequence.

This nauſeous game I have, my Lord, ſeen ſo often played, that I ſhould wonder the public was not ſick of it, if I did not know it ſo much more ſeldom led by its reaſon than driven by its paſſions, for which unfortunately the benefit of experience does not ſeem to be made. But what exceeds all bounds of ridicule is the ſtrut of inſolence, the airs of ſtate aſſumed by the ſucceſsful adventurer. And yet in what is it that the moſt wretched employ of ſcribbling in a white-limed garret, by the light of a farthing can-

candle, with no fuftenance but a red herring and fmall beer, is not even an honorable occupation, compared to that of catch-penny patriotifm? We hang a man, who, to defraud a private fubject of his money, is guilty of a fingle act of forgery of hand: but a man is advanced to the firft pofts of the kingdom, who, to cheat, or to abet the cheating the public of theirs, is guilty of a whole courfe of forgeries of heart. He will even have cheated it of more than its money, of one of the greateft of all human goods, of its eſteem, of which he will have made no better uſe, than to ſell the too credulous people, like ſheep at a market, while, ſillier than ſheep, they will too often ſtand to be fleeced, without bleating.

Read, my Lord, but with attention, our hiſtory from Charles the Firſt down to the preſent period, and you will conſtantly find ſome Court-point that was, at the ſame time, an unnational one; which was felt enough to put this country into a ſtate of defenſive war againſt the court, and againſt its accomplices, in form of miniſter or miniſters, who ſold to the much miſtaken ſovereign an aſſiſtance, doubly treacherous, in its being at once detrimental to their country and to himſelf.

The Marqueſs d'Argenſon has very juſtly obſerved, that this new ſiſtem of government by miniſtries, has obtained in many parts of Europe, as well as with us. True. But the difference is, that in other countries it is owing to the indolence of deſpotiſm; in ours, to the corruption of liberty; while ſo many members of the ſenate, whoſe duty it

is

is to conſider themſelves as the lawful judges and comptrollers of the miniſtry, in duty bound, not only theirſelves to do no wrong to the nation, but to ſee that no one elſe does any, too often ſink ſo low, as theirſelves to take their impulſion from it, and ſuffer their votes to be as currently canvaſſed, preſumed, and undertaken for, as the drudgery of the arranteſt ſlaves, whoſe bodies being venal may be only a misfortune, whereas a venal ſoul can never be leſs than a guilt. A dominion over the underſtanding is a truſt unalienable to any mortal, and eſpecially to ſuch an one as can have no reaſon to pretend to it, unleſs to make of it an uſe pernicious to his country. It is even treaſonable to enſlave, on any account, the dignity and the eminence of parliamentary rank. As it is, opinions in general are not anticipated from reaſon, but from intereſt, humor, prejudice, connexion, party, from every thing,

in short, but the one thing needful, a regard for country.

From this remissness or falsity of too many of the trustees of the public cause, it is, that this originally mushroom-power of the ministry has lately gained such a cedar-height. The government itself has currently taken the air and form of the system of Tonquin, in which there are two kings, the nominal, or king *de jure*, called the *Bua*, the other the king *de facto*, called the *Civa*, or first minister, who dispatches all affairs, and is the great *Factotum* of the state.

Many of our late Sovereigns have, in favor of some unnational point to be carried, against their own clearest interest, most humbly acquiesced in being nothing more under their Minister than what the Roman Consuls were under the Emperor in the times of Imperial Rome. The public acts were, indeed,

indeed, ſtill loaded with their names, while they had no more power than what ſome of our miniſter-ridden monarchs have had over a ſervant from whom they were obliged to take their orders, before they could give them; and who, to mend the matter, was not always their own choice; but elected for them, like the Dey of Algiers, by his influence among the mercenaries.

Such a place, a place poſſeſſed by ſuch a tenure, is, in all conſcience, contemptible enough: but what can you think of the men of rank and fortune, who can, without the excuſe of indigence, be mean enough to hold up his train, and act in quality of his ſubalterns, abettors, and accomplices, with ſome miniſterial ſheep-mark upon them, in form of place or penſion, that obviates the queſtion of *Cujum pecus? an Melibœi?* a poor mutton-headed flock,

ready to follow any bell-weather, and jump for intereſt after any party, whether of court or country.

Is it not, then, owing to this execrable ſyſtem, that we now ſee the nation lie like a carcaſe almoſt picked to the bone, the ravens driven away from which, keep croaking at the vultures in poſſeſſion, who are preying on their miſerable leavings?

Soon, nay, perhaps already, power muſt go a begging with no one to take it in, it ſtinks ſo of the rottenneſs of the times. Men of leſs public ſpirit than Phocion will be afraid of Phocion's fate, who periſhed for having occaſionally taken the helm, in what he himſelf called the wreck of the State.

In ſhort, my Lord, I ſee no reſource for the ſalvation of this country, but one, which I repreſented to my Lord Duke ſome years ago, which, he entirely approved,

proved, and which nothing but his ill ſtate of health hindered him from puſhing with all his power: This was, a conſtitutional plan for a parliamentary exertion, in a proper manner. Pray heaven it may not be too late! For even the nobleſt remedy may loſe its efficacy and character, by being delaid till the diſeaſe ſhall have turned for death. Every other recourſe to oligarchical combinations will moſt likely be found a paultry and dangerous palliation.

I was unlucky enough to ſtate this notion of mine to Lord Waſherley, juſt to divert myſelf with hearing what I was ſure he would ſay; nor did he diſappoint me. His anſwer was perfectly in character. He ſaid, he was aſſured it would not do, the face of the times was ſo ſet againſt it. For this I heartily forgave, and even pitied him; for the very idea was enough to ſweat him. It is not eaſy to perſuade men of the good

to result from efforts of which they feel themselves incapable. Every thing tending to greatness of spirit is lost upon little minds; they are incapable of strength or elevation. A Willow will never be an Oak, nor a Butterfly an Eagle, nor a Trifler a Statesman.

I shall punctually observe the orders you gave me for making Mrs. Williams a genteel present, for the compliment of keeping her apartments for you against the next races, an offer which I do not wonder at your not accepting.

To say nothing less than the truth, races, in their present state of amazing stupidity, would be even beneath your scorn, for scorn implies notice, but for the real mischief it does to both the mobs, the little and the great.

The common people, in the country, it robs of much more manly diversions than that of silly gaping at running horses.

horſes. It takes them off from wreſtling, leaping, bowling, throwing the bar, and other rural ſports, which render the body robuſt, and qualify them for exerciſes of the militia, that only conſtitutional army of Britain, which, to be effective, ſhould, conformably to the original inſtitutes of Nobility, be officered by the men of the firſt titles and rank in the kingdom, who, if they were in earneſt, would ſoon give it a diſcipline as formidable as that of the regulars, or ſtanding army, which ſpringing out of the corruption of the feudal government, after its diſſolution, might almoſt make that form regretted, with all its train of evils and inconveniencies. It has actually enſlaved France; but Britain it has hitherto only beggared, which leads at leaſt to ſlavery.

But as to the men of faſhion, or rank, who have run into a folly ſo very wretch-

ed, that it has not even the excuſe of leading to any pleaſure which taſte would not ſpurn with diſdain, what would it be to me, to you, or to the nation, that this, or that titled ideot of fortune, ſhould make it his ruling paſſion, and court diſtinction, from ſo miſerable a futility, but for the melancholic conſideration, that the abſurdity of every individual contributes in ſome meaſure to form the general maſs of worthleſſneſs, and helps to eſtabliſh a contemptible character of the times? In which view, where men of power and influence are wrong-headed, their private folly may be deemed a public calamity.

While men of real good ſenſe, and worthineſs of character, ſenſible that attention to buſineſs, and to improvement, requires, at intervals, the relief of diverſions, but at the ſame time convinced, that

that the eſſence of the ſoul conſiſts in the act of thinking, look out for ſuch manly amuſements as may ſatisfy that at once noble and agreeable faculty; the little fry of triflers are on the hunt for nothing ſo much as for ſuch objects as may furniſh them with matter of not thinking; ſuch as cards, races, and the like futilities.

As to races, the pretext of their being of uſe to preſerve the breed of a very valuable animal, may originally have been juſt: but I can hardly imagine any one driveller enough to attribute that motive to the preſent heroes of the turf. They would laugh at any one that would do them the unjuſt honor of but ſuſpecting them of it. No. The current ſiſtem of the rage of betts, is grown the primary conſideration, and is nothing better than a vile ingraftment of avarice, on a ſtupid ſtock of vanity.

The great ſporters at the races, have no more in their head the idea of keeping up the breed of horſes, than gamblers while they are ſtripping their bubbles at play, have that of encouraging the manufacturers of cards and dice.

A plea of much the like validity, was offered in defence of the Beargarden, and Hockley in the Hole, importing in ſubſtance, that the preſervation of the national valor depended on the encouragement given to the noble entertainment of a couple of the loweſt wretches, under the name of bruiſers, mounting a ſtage, and heroically fighting at fiſty-cuffs for the houſe, that is to ſay, for the money taken at the door, from ſuch as could find an amuſement in ſo intereſting and ſo curious a ſight; and this, I can aſſure you, though it may ſeem incredible to you, that ſome of them were of the higheſt claſſes of life. But avarice,

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in its true character, of there being nothing ſo low to which it will not ſtoop, crept in here too, and produced its betts, which became the principal ſauce of the taſteleſs diverſion.

A pitiful complaiſance, however, to the follies of the great, erected theſe black-guard battles into the dignity of the pugilate of the antients, with about as much propriety as the races of Newmarket may be compared to the hippodromes, or chariot-races of the Circus, before the degenerate times of Rome. And even then the factions of the various colors of the charioteers liveries turned more upon the humor of oppoſition than upon the vile admixture of any pecuniary conſiderations; the laying betts being left, with great propriety, to the dregs of the people.

The ſad low nonſenſe of theſe boxing-matches grew, however, to ſuch a pitch,

pitch, and was attended with so many bad consequences, and especially that of raising no spirit so eminently as the spirit of highwaymen and footpads, that the legislature interfered to put it down; nor would it be very honorable to the British valor to suppose that it has suffered in the least by the suppression.

Not that by this I would insinuate any wish of mine, that the races, with all their train of inconveniences and evils, should undergo the like fate: let them rather die of themselves, die of the disease the most common and most fatal to such entertainments, their own rank intrinsic dulness and insipidity.

Besides, my Lord, such an intervention might alarm the whole nation of the Dunces, for their inestimable privilege of worthlessness. To them it would have an air of persecution for their religion of bagatelle, that would only make them

them cleave to it the clofer. Unfortunately, too, for them, they have to plead the examples of fome men of very good fenfe, who have indulged themfelves in this amufement; but then thofe ideots never ftand to confider the diftinction between throwing fome trifling into life, and one's whole life into trifling. A man that would never let himfelf down to play the fool, would neither be the happieft nor the wifeft man in the world. Amufements, as amufements, are even neceffary, but it is only for fools to exalt them into occupations, on the plan of feeking in them a diverfion which they are condemned never to find, from their never having had ferious employment, without which the word itfelf, Diverfion, is an abfurdity. Who can be diverted that has not had bufinefs from which to be diverted? Or will any one call the dreary waſte of a fool's life diverfion? And yet if you was to take from them

them their horſes, dogs, dice, cards, dreſs, loungings at a court, ſmall-talk, electioneering vanity, in ſhort, all the futilities of falſe taſte, of ſilly oſtentation, and mean avarice, what would you leave them, but an uncomfortable deſart of the head and heart, in which they would loſe themſelves? The vaſt dominions of Dulneſs are their native country, out of which they would pine like the Swiſs with their *Hemſveh*. A Greenlander would as ſoon renounce the eternal ice of the Pole; a Negroe the ſuffocating heats of the Line; an Arab his barren ſands; a Hottentot his guts and garbage, as a fool his ſtupid nonſenſe, and his ridiculous connections of folly. Conſtitutionally unſuſceptible of great views, they conſtantly prefer the ignoble eaſe of worthleſſneſs to that heroic ſatisfaction which is to be found in public utility, the only genuine parent of public eſteem, and can ſit down contented with

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the infamy of never being ſo much as thought of, or named, by judges of merit, for any place of truſt or eminence, which, however, I muſt own, is not unfrequently the cauſe of their being choſen into one by a Miniſter, for his ſervice, and for the misfortune of their country.

Another curſe which attends them, is, that in the truly tame and faint character of mediocrity, being generally deſtitute of all original ſpirit, they are condemned for life to a ſervile inſtinct of imitation, from which, though vainly fond of diſtinguiſhing themſelves, they dare do nothing but what they ſee others do. This alone would make it impoſſible for them to be great men, while they congenially take one another for models, and are contagiouſly good for nothing. Thence ſo many men of rank continue grovelling all their lives. If their private influence, or the public misfortune, puts power

power or truſt into their hands, incapable of raiſing themſelves to an equality with their offices, they bring thoſe offices down to their own level, and render them as contemptible as themſelves.

Some again there are, whoſe natural levity forbidding them any reſting place, they are for ever ſubject to wandering fits, like the Norway rats, and wiſhing to be any where but juſt where they are: fidgetting about, light as feathers, the ſport of every idle unmeaning guſt of fancy, now wafted over ſea, now blown about town and country, till they take ground for ever.

Such, or the like characters, the great point, my Lord, is to pity and not reſemble them, eſpecially while their example is rather a living leſſon of every thing one would wiſh not to be.

I am very ſenſible to the honor you do me of approving and even adopting my

my idea of the benefit, which muft obviouſly reſult from occaſionally treating, in letters to intimate friends, of ſubjects, as they occur to you. Among my political reveries there is hardly any that ſtrikes me in a more favorable light, than that of its being made a ſtanding order of the Cabinet-Council, that every Officer of the State, in a great employ, and eſpecially our Miniſters at foreign Courts, ſhould annually give in, upon honor, his opinion on the public affairs, not only of his own department, but in general of the whole State. Such a practice might ſerve at once to give a ſatisfactory idea of the talents and abilities of the perſons employed, and often occaſionally to contribute uſeful lights to the government itſelf. You will, perhaps, object that ſome might elude this ordinance by employing Secretaries, or Writers for them. True; but even the merit of making a good choice

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of such would not be a small one. It would also serve to kindle a noble emulation, and excite many to acquire talents which they now see they may as well do without, or indeed better, considering the umbrage and offence taken by little people in power at any eminence of that kind. Such an institute, combined with the revival of that admirable policy once in practice, of selecting young Gentlemen of the greatest hopes from our Universities, to be bred in foreign parts, for public employment, might possibly restore to this nation its antient character of breeding great men for the cabinet as well as for the field, or at least preserve it from the shame and damage of being served by the meanest and most disqualified personages, Embassadors that cannot speak, and Secretaries of State that cannot write.

I come

I come now, my Lord, and I prefume you will think it high time, to that capital part of your letter which acquaints me of your new paffion for Miſs Maynwaring, and of your procedure on it, with her anſwer.

I am as far from the injuſtice of not diſtinguiſhing in your favor between thoſe things you cannot help, and thoſe you can, as I am from the perfidiouſneſs to you of ſoothing and encouraging you to perſevere in what you do yourſelf the honor of confeſſing to be wrong.

I do not, then, at all blame you for that weakneſs which is nothing but what you have in common with the reſt of mankind, of being momentarily ſubdued by a ſuperior attraction, real or imaginary. But, I own, I ſhould expect from the Marquefs of Soberton's power of reaſon ſuch a victorious effort as would diſtinguiſh him from the multitude,

titude, who on the like occasion are irrecoverably hurried away. Such an effort as would restore him to all his virtue, with only the greater lustre, for his having triumphed over a passion which, circumstanced as you are, is so dangerous an enemy to it.

I say circumstanced as you are, because I fairly own, that but for your engagement to Lady Harriet, which, for many reasons well known to your Lordship, is gone too far to be retracted with honor, I would not have a single reason to object to a choice that would so nobly justify any sacrifice you could make to it. I say nothing of that beauty of her's, which, to judge of it by its effect on your Lordship, must be great indeed; but considering only that simplicity of principle, that clearness of spirit, with which she has treated your offer, I am ready to allow that there can be no for-

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tune or rank to which ſhe is not at leaſt equal, eſpecially if you take into the account the mediocrity of her condition, which only exalts her the more. Clara on a throne, could not be more intrinſically majeſtic, than in her procedure towards you. Here the dignity is all her own. Her ſtrict honor, while it is fatal to your love, juſtifies, at leaſt, your choice, which to a mind ſo noble as your's muſt be ſome conſolation, and will, I hope, prove a not unprofitable incentive to imitation.

For, after all, not to flatter yourſelf, have you laid ſtreſs enough on your engagement to Lady Harriet? Could Clara, looking on it very juſtly as having proceeded too far to be retracted with honor, receive your addreſſes in any other light than thoſe of a virtually married man? You may obſerve I ſay nothing of her particular ſituation with reſpect

ſpect to Lady Harriet, which might, however, have had its ſhare in her determination.

In your deſiſtence then, from your purſuit, the more hopeleſs the better for you, as it is an argument the more for your deſiſtence. You obtain the double good of proving your manly power over yourſelf, and of purchaſing, though with the privation of a great pleaſure, an eſcape from a pain that muſt over-ballance it, if the duration of one may be ſet againſt the momentary exceſs of the other. For, after all, your ſucceſs with Clara could never have bred more than a temporary ſuſpenſion of your remorſe for your treatment of that moſt worthy, and moſt amiable Lady Harriet, whoſe conſent to give up her claim to you, conſidering her unqueſtionable and innocent love for you, would only have redoubled your guilt toward her. That compunction

then

then would, to one of your sensibility, have been a perrennial fountain of bitterness, in which the torch of love would have ran a great risque of being cruelly extinguished. Nothing being more unjust than the passions you would perhaps have, at the best tacitly, made Clara accountable to you for the failure of which you would yourself have seduced her into the being your accomplice. You would, and not quite without reason, suspect her of having yielded to your proposals upon other motives than those of love. Then would she, in your esteem, sink into the ordinary class of women, especially of her pretentions as to fortune and condition, to whom the advantages of such a match would have been an invincible temptation not to examine over-scrupulously the objections to it. But, above all, you would have found it difficult to reconcile yourself to yourself. Your deliverance then, by Clara's noble procedure, from

ſo laſting a torment to you, as your own juſt reflexions would have been, is perhaps not a leſs happineſs than your accompliſhing your purpoſes with her, as great a bliſs as I ſhould readily own that muſt have been, but for that poiſon of ſelf-reproach, which it might indeed deaden for a while, but never entirely kill. Soon would it recover its power to prove to you, that a pleaſure, neceſſarily ſhort-lived, when purchaſed at the expence of honor, is not the beſt of bargains for a long repentance, inevitably conſequential to the weakneſs of not having enough reſpected ſo ſacred a principle.

Nor think, my Lord, that in this I am crudely, and even inhumanly taxing you with a breach of honor. No. I am rather congratulating you on your happineſs, in having made ſuch a worthy choice, in the perſon of Clara, as has defended you from that precipice, de-

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fended you againſt yourſelf. I have before allowed, and very juſtly allowed, that ſuch weakneſſes are a tribute which the greateſt of men are liable to pay to human nature, inſomuch that the firſt ſteps are abſolutely not in their power, and thoſe firſt ſteps too often inſenſibly betray them into ulterior ones, which conſummate their fall. You have been evidently in the firſt caſe, and very fortunately are not in the ſecond: ſo that, now to proceed, while you have ſo fair an opening for retreat, would be in you a determinate will to act againſt your own ſenſe of right, which is what I do not in the leaſt fear for you. It is only for weak minds, like weak conſtitutions, not to expell the poiſon they have once imbibed: but your eſtabliſhed ſuperiority to that claſs, does not leave you that ſad excuſe.

I do not then hope too much from you. For as to that character of invincibility, which the modern Tragedy-writers, and Novelists, have, in their crazy fancy, bestowed upon the passion of Love, and of which that numbing frigidity, with which they in general treat of it, proves that they never knew what love was, nothing is more false, especially with regard to great men. Heroes, you may find in history, have not been more exempt than others, from a passion which, of all the human passions, has the most to say for itself. You will find too, that some have gone great lengths of inconsiderateness and folly, for the objects of their attachment; but you will find few, or none of them, such desperately true *lovyers* as to put themselves theatrically to death with the dagger or bowl, merely for being *crossed in love*. You may, indeed, now and then, read in our news-papers of a love-

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lorn chamber-maid, applying for relief to her garter, or a ſlighted apprentice taking the lover's leap into the next pond; but rarely of any above their rank of life, or their ſize of underſtanding, playing the fool in that manner. Nor can there be a truer, though ſo trite a proverb, than that the bell rarely tolls for thoſe who die of love. The bills of mortality do not ſo much as admit it among the diſeaſes which "fleſh is heir to." All this I mention, my Lord, you may eaſily perceive, not moſt certainly, as ſuppoſing you in the caſe of ſuch nonſenſe, but merely to take from you any ſcruple about an extraordinarineſs of procedure in your ſuffering ſo many ſuperior conſiderations, but eſpecially that of honor, to overcome a paſſion, in which, without very ſufficient reaſons for breaking its hold, I readily admit that conſtancy is even a virtue.

If tragedy and romance dealt more on truth, and consequently more in nature, or if they paid their court more to the virtues than to the weaknesses of mankind, they would, oftener than they do exemplarily represent, in the most amiable, and in the most incouraging light, such characters as do perhaps more honor to human kind, in their conquest over violent passions, than in that total exemption from them, which is much more frequently the effect of imbecility, than of a perfection, at least too rare among mere mortals, to afford hopes of imitation. I should, for example, imagine, that the continency of a Scipio, would be a subject, if handled by a real genius, to the full as interesting, and much more edifying than that of an Anthony losing the world for love, or rather for a luxurious attachment, for of love he had not virtue enough to be susceptible. And by the by, well considered,

fidered, what does the ftory of his amours with Cleopatra preſent, but that of one of the moſt deteſtable, profligate, and withall ſtupid cullies, whoſe name ever fouled the pages of hiſtory, ruining himſelf for an abandoned woman, to whom the title of Queen was but a reproach the more, notorious only for pride without honor, intrigues without love, prodigality without taſte, talents without application, and artifice without common ſenſe, a character, in ſhort, ſomewhat of the air and hue of his own, in which what brilliancy there ever appeared was that of a jet-black? Could then the fall of the mean murderer of Tully, of the execrable conſpirator with Ceſar againſt the liberty of his country, provoke any ſentiment, but that of a regret of his not having expired on a gibbet, or of his not having lain broken alive on a wheel? I know this is digreſſive, but I am carried away by my indignation,

on my recollection of his catastrophe having been too tenderly treated, on the theatre, by some excellent authors. I allow, however, that some poetical justice there was in the historical truth of things, since he was brought to his death, tho' a death not equal to his crimes, by one of his own gang, that cowardly and cruel in cold blood, Augustus, whose successes, as they are called, were the ruin not only of his own family, which would indeed have been nothing more than a just visitation, but of the greatest republic, that with so many vices compensated by so many virtues, rendered every thing relative to it interesting in its favor, till sinking into slavery, its annals, after that period, became of as little account or estimation as the Sessions-papers of the Old-Baily; the reproach of humanity, the disgrace of history, and the scorn of curiosity.

But

But that by the by. It may, however, without any flattery to humankind, be averred, that the cure of Love, conquered by virtue, is not ſo extremely rare, as Poets, Noveliſts, and Romance-writers would perſuade us, in their records of fancy and fiction. The real truth is, that this paſſion, with all its arbitrary power, is not always invincible, eſpecially by great characters; to repreſent it otherwiſe is not only injurious but diſheartening to human reaſon. The ſtatuary, who exhibited the man overcoming the lion, if he even granted more to invention than to matter of fact, furniſhed at leaſt to mankind an encouragement to try for the victory, which may ſometimes be gained with preſuming, but never by an abject deſpair of it.

Hitherto, my Lord, you have a clear right to treat this incident as nothing

more than one of the surprises of a passion, which seems to delight in taking captives, none more than the greatest men, when they are not enough on their guard: but that captivity needs not be lasting; a noble exertion of manly resolution will easily, and with a good grace, free you from chains, injurious to reason and to honor.

I say nothing to you of the reparation to Lady Harriet by your just return to her, nor of the respect you might think due to the memory of a tender mother, who so passionately wished this match into which she engaged you; I lay even no stress on the regard you owe to yourself, to your plighted honor, and especially to the happiness of a young Lady to whom a desertion would be so cruel an indignity, because I am but too sensible that love is not to be commanded by

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any refpects, and flies with difdain from every thing that has an air of tie, or conftraint. Liberty is its very effence; it will fometimes, indeed, endure to be expelled, by the powers of reafon and virtue, but never to be compelled into poffeffion. This point, then, is too tender, too delicate, too much dependent on yourfelf, for me to prefume or wifh to touch upon it. Whatever refolution you may take, be the merit of it all your own. You have in your own breaft the moft authoritative of all monitors. Confult that facred oracle, your heart.

I am, my Lord, &c.

LAUNCELOT GREVILLE.

LETTER XXIX.

The Marquefs of SOBERTON *to* LAUNCELOT GREVILLE, *Efq*;

Peterfham.

My ever honored Friend,

I Would not fuffer you to remain a moment longer than I could help it, under any incertainty as to my refolution and procedure, in confequence of my difaftrous paffion, and fhall, therefore in this letter confine myfelf to that object alone, leaving all other matters to future notice.

After that I had received Clara's letter, I waited near three days before I could well determine what to do. At length,

length, urged by the violence of my sentiments, I could think of nothing better than to try to obtain one more audience from Clara, in which I proposed to exert my utmost efforts of argument aud persuasion to induce her to accept my offer: as little of hope, then, as the design of this step presented, I took it nevertheless.

I went to Mrs. Buckley's, who, I found, was only denied; but as to Clara, she had absolutely, the day after she had sent me her answer, removed from Mrs. Buckley's, without leaving any direction or trace to where she was gone. Mrs. Buckley, I might very well suppose, knew; but it was not through her, I could hope any information. Without ever having come to any explanation in form, I was perfectly clear as to the unfavorableness of her sentiments to my desires.

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In the perplexity of ſpirit, cauſed to me by this news of Clara's removal, I immediately, though not without confuſion, not without reluctance, drove to Lady Harriet's in town, where I wiſhed, and yet dreaded, to have my doubts cleared up, as to the diſappearing of Clara in that manner, and at that juncture. Lady Harriet did not receive me with her uſual chearfulneſs, which, in the natural conſciouſneſs of guilt, I inſtantly aſcribed to ſome intimation, I will not ſay directly from Clara, for I did her diſcretion and honor too much juſtice to ſuſpect her of any ill office of that kind, but from ſome quarter or other, of what had paſſed againſt the regard I owed to Lady Harriet.

I was miſtaken. Nothing of that nature had tranſpired, ſo as to come to her knowledge. The little cloud I found on her countenance, and which

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was presently dissipated, proceeded from nothing but her sensibility to a short note, which she had just before received from Clara, containing nothing more than a tender and succinct excuse for declining to take leave in form, for a journey into the country, which a sudden emergency required, and which she did not specify. Nor did Lady Harriet's imagination lead her to any conjecture, but that of some family-concern, which might render Clara's presence necessary, or at least important, so that she laid no farther stress on it.

It was not so with me; for I could plainly, and with great self-reproach, discern, that Clara had had recourse to this step, not out of any fear of me, for with one of my character that was quite out of the question; nor even out of any apprehension of my visits or assiduities being more frequent to her than

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fhe could have wifhed, for her own quiet, or Lady Harriet's, as fhe could not but be fenfible, that one fingle expreſs prohibition of them would have rid her of fuch importunity; but purely out of her candor and good nature to deliver me, by that deciſiveneſs of conduct, from the cruelty of incertainty, as it is the mixture of hope with deſire that creates and continues the torture. Poſſibly too fhe might, in her ſpirit of friendſhip, think fhe was leaving, by her abſence, the fairer field for the juſtice of Lady Harriet's reclaimer.

But whatever were her motives, and I am very ſure, that to know her, and not aſcribe to her the moſt virtuous and the moſt laudable ones, would be the height of injuſtice, my vexation, my ſorrow for my having diſturbed her peace and thus driven her out of her propoſed courſe, made it very difficult to reconcile myſelf to myſelf.

And

And here, my dear friend, do not let me make a parade to you of a falſe virtue; truth is to me above every thing: for ſuffer it or not honor, admit it or not duty, murmur or not my heart, I muſt ſay, that if I had ſeen the leaſt glimpſe of an overture of ſucceeding with the invincible Clara, I ſhould have ſacrificed every conſideration to my paſſion for her. I could ſooner have parted with my life than with any the leaſt ſhadow of a hope of obtaining, in the poſſeſſion of her, the ſupreme end of all my wiſhes, of all my deſires. I had already actually given up more than my life, my honor, in the propoſals I had made to her, and which, for that very reaſon, were, to my ſhame I confeſs it, unworthy of ſo pure, ſo celeſtial a character: my paſſion, in ſhort, burnt too fiercely to be extinguiſhed by any thing but utter deſpair, and I preſume, there is no paſſion, except in ideots, that can ſurvive hope. It

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is in that light that it may, without a paradox, be ſaid, that what redoubled my eſteem for Clara, leſſened my love, by placing her at a height ſo much above my reach, that not to have given over the purſuit was only tempting the renewal of the fable of the embraced clouds. It is not, then, to me that the honors of the triumph are due, but to Clara. I have not to boaſt of a paſſion vanquiſhed by my own reaſon, but by her virtue and my deſpair.

All theſe thoughts did not inſtantly occur to me during my ſtay with Lady Harriet, which my vexation obliged me to make as ſhort as it well could: but in the firſt moments of ſolitude, I came to a clear explanation with myſelf, on the nature of my ſituation. Clara's cool and reſolute procedure, combined with my perfect conviction of her ſuperiority to all ſuſpicion of coquetry or art,

art, had satisfied me of what I had not to expect from her. I had, then, a barbed arrow to pluck forth from my breast, which I was sure would tear my vitals in the attempt. Do not let me, my worthy friend, give your sensibility the pain of a minute description of the pangs it cost me, of the tortures I endured, before I could, in the agonies of my despair, pronounce to my desires, their sentence of death. They were criminal, myself their Judge, though too much their accomplice not to deserve to suffer, as I actually did, little short of death with them.

Behold me, then, restored to freedom! but purchased at how dear a rate! I shudder yet to think of it! still there was another piece of justice remaining for me to execute. A reparation to Lady Harriet, only the more her right, for her not so much as suspecting that I owed

owed it to her. Nothing is more true than that in the midft of all my rage of paffion for Clara, I had never once had the barbarity to impute to Lady Harriet as matter of complaint from me, whatever bar my fituation with her might oppofe to my fuccefs with Clara. Nor do I by this mean, with a coxcomb's prefumption, that that bar was the only one, for I have no fort of reafon to think I had made any fort of impreffion on Clara's heart. However, I was fo far from looking on Lady Harriet with an evil eye on the account of her being an impediment to my defigns, that I was conftantly in my inward fentiments for her proving to myfelf, that though there may be no loving more than one at once, there is a greater latitude for eftcem, as mine was, I am fure, fairly divided between herfelf and Clara. It was, indeed, precifely on that folid and unalterable foundation of eftcem, that it became

became the easier for me to resume, even with greater force, that tender regard for Lady Harriet, which I had once taken for love, and which perhaps was love, though not in so violent a degree of ardor as that with which Clara had inspired me. The sentiments I had had for Lady Harriet, had more of the nature of a lambent harmless flame; but my passion for Clara, more the character of a fierce fire, that had burnt reason, duty, and even honor itself out of doors.

On this occasion, then, I have called myself to a strict account; and believe me, my dear friend, could I, on the strictest scrutiny into the deepest recesses of my heart, have found lurking at the bottom of it, so mean, so selfish a view as that of filling the uncomfortable void left in it, by my failure of success with Clara, with a resumption of my addresses

addreſſes to Lady Harriet, I honor, I eſteem, and I hope I may now ſay, I love her too much to make of her nothing more than a reſerve, or reſource, in the caſe of another's refuſal. Inſtead of the indignity to her of ſuch a motive of procedure in me, my whole thoughts, my whole ſoul are intent on nothing ſo much as on intitling myſelf to her forgiveneſs of that involuntary crime, by the ſincerity and innocence of of my future conduct. There may be characters infernal enough to hate where they offend; but to me the injuries, ſecret or not, which I had done to Lady Harriet, are to me but an indearment of her the more. Before, I had only ſimply an engagement to fulfill, I have now a breach of it to repair. Beſides, let me not diſſemble with myſelf or you, it is not eaſy to conceive how much Lady Harriet has gained of advantage in my opinion, and even of lovelineſs in my eyes,

eyes, by the consideration of that friendship with which she could inspire so admirable a judge of worth as Clara. There must be in her own character something extremely engaging and attractive to live with her, as, indeed, I always judged from what I myself could discern of her; but Clara's choice is to me a powerful confirmation.

I shall also have gained by that failure, which I own it was no merit of mine, that it was not entirely consummated, a benefit, which is not a little one, that of an experience of my weakness, which will for ever henceforward keep me in a salutary diffidence of myself, and on a thorough guard against another surprise of this kind, which, by the by, I have not greatly to fear. There are not many Claras in the world.

I am, however, sensible, that in thus returning under the banners, which I had

had rather traiterouſly deſerted, I ſin againſt all the laws of romance; according to which, though inconſtancy is not approved, the beſt reparation for it, that of returning to the firſt attachment, is as little the practice; but leaving that pleaſant ſtatute of the Love-code to its proper authority in the imaginary ſpaces of fiction and chimæra, I am not in the leaſt afraid of ſubmitting this recovery of my falſe ſtep, to the deciſions of Reaſon and even of Love. The reſtoration of a loſt heart to its right owner is the only atonement I can now make, and I am but too happy, and more ſo, I am ſure, than I deſerve, in that act of juſtice being as yet in my power.

In this ſpirit it is, then, that I propoſe immediately to ſet about haſtening the accompliſhment of my engagement to Lady Harriet. I know, that her family paſſionately wiſhes it, and I would fain

fain flatter myself that the pressing it will not be intirely disagreeable to herself. The more reason I have to think so, I feel myself the more guilty, and the more obliged, in honor, to devote the rest of my life to the making her's happy, and on that happiness to build my own.

But then that angel Clara! nay, do not be alarmed, I cannot, it is true, mention her name without emotion, but it is most certainly not the emotion of love. It is rather with such a rapture of zeal mixed with awe, as one would speak of a super-human being. She is gone. But where? That I shall soon, I hope, learn, for my purpose of fair amends to her for any disturbance I have given to her. Wherever she goes, my constant good wishes, joined with the purest intentions for her service, shall pursue her. My love has yielded its place to an eternal friendship: I look on

her family as mine: it ſhall have as much the benefit of my will to have been honorably united to it, as it would have had of the deed itſelf.

I had naturally, you may be ſure, made ſome enquiries about her relations: nothing could be more favorable to my views: you have already been appriſed of Mrs. Buckley's tranſcendent worth: Her nephew, Mr. Mellefont, married to Clara's elder ſiſter, is a Clergyman of an excellent character; in ſhort, one would imagine, that merit ran in a rich vein through the whole family, like the ore-ſtreak in a mine. Moſt luckily it is, juſt at this juncture, in my power to give Mr. Mellefont, who, I am told, has a growing family, a demonſtration of my good will to all who are related to Clara. The Duke has given me the preſentation, at my diſpoſal, of the living of Welborough: it brings

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in near seven hundred a year, which, even every other consideration a-part, I do not find that I could bestow better than on so worthy a man. Nor is this all; so far as my influence shall ever extend, I will have my eye on him, for any preferment or for any advantages it will be possible for me to procure to him and to his. These overtures of service, actual and intended, I shall, through Mrs. Buckley, render, I hope, acceptable to him, both in the propriety of the manner, and in the purity of its motive.

As to Clara herself, my marks of friendship shall be as boundless as my esteem. With what I know of Lady Harriet's generosity, and especially of her dispositions towards her, I have not the least doubt of her being even thankful to me, for the proposal of her making, in the form of a wedding favor, a present to

Clara of her jewels, as thofe of the Dutchefs will be full fufficient for herfelf. Thefe Clara's delicacy will engage her to receive with lefs repugnance from Lady Harriet, than from me; who do not, however, mean that they fhall acquit me to her. I fhall, of myfelf, join to them the gift of that neat fnug-box of mine in Surry, with the grounds round it, which may be about two hundred and forty pounds a year: but of this donation, I muft alfo intreat Mrs. Buckley to undertake the making the acceptance agreeable to Clara, in its true light of an homage paid by the pureft friendfhip to the moft perfect worth. It would be hard, indeed, if vice engroffed fo exclufively all rewards as not to leave any for virtue.

Mean while, I have not any fear of your imputing this account I am giving you of my intentions, to any vain oftentation

tation or parade: you will easily see my drift in it is to recover what of your esteem I may have justly forfeited by my weakness, and to make you some amends for the pain that weakness was but the more likely to give you, for your having laid the foundations of a stronger constitution of mind than what such a terrible falling-off has betrayed. Remember, I can never be reconciled to myself, till I have your approbation for my sanction.

Yours, &c.

SOBERTON.

LETTER XXX.

LAUNCELOT GREVILLE, *Esq*; *to the Marquess of* SOBERTON.

at ——, *Gloucestershire.*

My Lord-Marquess,

YOU have recovered your fall with such a superiority of spirit, that it is a question whether you could have stood fast with more dignity. It is without any compliment, which you know me uncapable of using with you, or indeed with any one, that I may venture to assure you, that you have given to that untoward accident of a passion, only unjustifiable by your situation of a prior engagement, an issue worthy of yourself;

yourſelf; you have reſcued your honor out of jeopardy, and turned your defeat to a triumph; only the more a triumph for your renouncing your claim to it.

Your diſpoſitions towards Clara and her family are truly noble, and ſtrongly prove to me your complete victory over any little acrimony natural to be felt on the diſappointment of deſires ſo ardent as yours; they prove you recovered, without any danger of a relapſe.

But eſpecially let me congratulate you on your return to your engagement with Lady Harriet, who ſo much deſerves your love, and who has given ſo many proofs of her ſincere affection for you. What offers did ſhe, not refuſe, on your account, even before matters were ſo much advanced as they have been ſince? Graced, as ſhe is, with all the advantages of blooming youth, of beauty, of for-

tune, of education, and especially of excellent sense and character, I do not hazard much in bespeaking for you the most exalted happiness, in the form of the most indispensable duty; that of keeping faith with that amiable and all-accomplished Lady.

It is with that auspicious presage that I conclude, and am

Yours, &c.

LAUNCELOT GREVILLE.

LET-

LETTER XXXI.

Mrs BUCKLEY *to Mr.* MELLEFONT.

London.

Dear Nephew,

PREPARE ſoon to receive your fair fugitive ſiſter. But for what a fugitive? For Love? No. Gueſs again. For Honor? Now you come nearer the matter. But let me explain myſelf, after which I ſhall deliver the pen to Clara, who is, at this moment, with me, in Lady Proffer's cloſet, in the city, dated from which you receive this letter. Leave her, then, while I am writing to you a whole Iliad, to amuſe herſelf with reading the laſt new play. But where is Lady Proffer? Patience, and I will

tell you. She is at this inſtant as buſy as you can imagine, in preparations for her journey into the country, a month, at leaſt, ſooner than ſhe originally propoſed, for the ſake of Clara's company, who is in a hurry to leave town, and to go down to you, for a reaſon which will come in courſe.

No ſooner had ſhe received the Marqueſs of Soberton's declaration, which, as I wrote you before, I had long, not without reaſon, anticipated, and which, I aſſure you, gave her infinite pain, on Lady Harriet's account, than merely from the dictates of her own heart, ſhe ſent him, in the politeſt terms, the moſt peremptory denial: after which ſhe had the impudence to aſk me if I approved her conduct, as if it was poſſible not to worſhip her for it. To confeſs the truth, I had done her, for ſome time, the injuſtice to be in pain for her, while I ſaw her,

her, with ſo much facility and unreſerve, deliver herſelf up to the danger of Lord Soberton's diſtinctions and aſſiduities, whoſe great and undoubted merit made me tremble for her, and, indeed, for himſelf. I knew him, irrevocably engaged in honor to Lady Harriet, or but for that invincible bar there is not, as I conceive, in Europe, that match I ſhould have been better pleaſed with than between Clara and him. He is, to do him no more than juſtice, a moſt worthy, a moſt amiable character, independent of his title and fortune, which I am very clear are, in her delicacy of thinking, leſs a temptation than an objection: matter rather of apology than of boaſt to her. The worſt that can be ſaid of him, is, that, on this occaſion, a paſſion for an object the likelieſt in the world to create and even to juſtify a violent one, be this ſaid without the leaſt partiality to Clara, hurried him beyond the bounds

of duty, and compelled him to take a ſtep, in which, he was too worthy, too reſpectable a character, in ſhort, not to deſerve the happineſs he met with, of being refuſed where it would have been death, both to his honor and to her's, to have been accepted. As it has happened, it was reſerved for Clara's magnanimity not only to ſave him from himſelf, but to give him withall the conſolation of finding, that ſince he was to fall into ſuch an error, it was ſomewhat mitigated by the dignity of a choice that was to preſerve him from its being irreparable: one involuntary error, in ſhort, compenſated by a thouſand virtues.

It was then on a ſtrong preſumption of the Marqueſs's probity, that Clara, founding a hope of what I am perſuaded ſhe ſincerely wiſhes, his return to Lady Harriet, ſtarted, of herſelf, the idea of confirming, by her immediate abſence, the

the deciſiveneſs of her anſwer. But to this ſhe added a reaſon, which I confeſs would never have come into my head, and which yet is not abſolutely without its weight. Of the two caſes ſhe concluded one muſt be the conſequence, that the Marqueſs would not reſume his engagement to Lady Harriet, or, that he would; but that in either ſuppoſition, it was clearly right for her to quit the ſcene; on which, if ſhe ſtaid, on his continuing his injuſtice to Lady Harriet, ſuſpicions might ariſe of her deſignedly hovering and playing a ſtale game of duplicity, or of attraction by repulſes. On the other hand, if, as ſhe rather hoped, wiſhed, and believed, he ſhould come to that concluſion, to which he was bound by every tie of honor and of duty, Lady Harriet would infallibly give her an invitation, which ſhe could not eaſily elude by any other excuſe than that of a great diſtance, to aſſiſt at her nuptials, a ceremony

remony, which, for any objection ſhe had to them, ſhe could ſee with no ſentiment but that of a ſincere joy, on her friend's account; but then ſhe imagined, that after what had paſſed between Lord Soberton and her, there might appear in her being preſent at them, a kind of air of bravade to him, which was an inſult neither in her nature, nor indeed deſerved from her by his Lordſhip.

To this reſolution then of Clara's, I concurred, with no repugnance, but that of parting from ſo ſweet a companion; eſpecially too, as I was ſenſible that her original intention was to go down to you, in the courſe of the ſummer. But as this removal was, by the circumſtance, required, for obvious reaſons, to be immediate, I thought ſhe could not do better than to accept Lady Proffer's preſſing invitation to ſtay a few days with her in the city, where ſhe might paſs as much

much for being gone into the country, as if ſhe was a hundred miles off, and where ſhe might, in the mean while, make her diſpoſitions for effectively ſetting out on the journey. But Lady Proffer was no ſooner acquainted of this intention of her's, to proceed for Lancaſhire, than, ever ready to ſeize an occaſion of ſervice, ſhe propoſed to take her down with her herſelf, and deliver her to you, as ſafe and as well conditioned, as ſhe terms it, as ſhe received her from you. Nothing could be more agreeable to Clara, who has a great averſion for travelling alone; ſo that you may very ſoon expect to have her with you, and in her one of the greateſt ornaments of human kind. I think, too, I dare anſwer for you, that you will at once approve and admire the ſacrifice ſhe has made to honor and to friendſhip; content to quit a ſcene of numberleſs conqueſts, among whom there

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are certainly perſons of great worth, but who have not had the ſecret to touch her heart, and to ſeek, in your rural receſs, a refuge from all the pomp and glare of a world, in which ſhe has ſo many univerſally received pretentions to make a moſt diſtinguiſhed figure. But I repeat what I have before mentioned to you; I never ſaw one of her age, I think, ſcarce ſeventeen, with ſo determinate a turn for purely domeſtic life, which is ſurely the greateſt qualification for that connubial one, to which, however, ſhe appears to have ſo little diſpoſition. Nor can ſhe re-appear among you, under the diſgrace of a neglected beauty, ſince ſhe has evidently refuſed ſome of the firſt matches of the kingdom, and moſt of them from that principle of honor which is her unerring guide, that of diſdaining, on any proſpect of fortune or ambition, or, indeed, on any conſideration whatever, to give her

her hand without her heart. A profanation of which whoever is voluntarily guilty, not only forecloſes all equity of redemption from one of the worſt kinds of hell on earth, to which ſhe will have condemned herſelf, but forfeits all right of repining at thoſe horrors of her fate, which can hard fail of being the puniſhment of her folly, of her meanneſs, and, indeed, of the baſeneſs of her perjured injuſtice to the man ſhe marries, to whom ſhe ſolemnly vows a love ſhe has not, nor is probably in her power ever to have. For ſurely any appearance of fondneſs afterwards muſt ariſe from a motive too groſs to be miſtaken for love. On the other hand, what execration is not due to thoſe tirannical parents, who, ſacrificing Nature to Fortune, inflict a puniſhment worſe than death itſelf, on children inſtinctively of a taſte too juſt to ſee the ſame charms as they do in money or titles! If ſuch parents were

were but to conſider the torments to which they expoſe a tender amiable child, by throwing her into the arms of ſome diſagreeable wretch, whom not to deteſt would be a want of common ſenſe; if they would but fairly weigh a loathſom horror againſt the diſpatch of a moment's mortal pain, they would own that the ſacrifices of infants to Moloch, in the vale of Hinnon, were tender mercies compared to the ſufferings to which they doom their innocent children; by making victims of them to Mammon. While, to render the cruelty the more completely bitter, they inſult them with the pretence of its being all for their happineſs, though they are all the while conſulting nothing but their own intereſt or their own vanity. I do not here lay any ſtreſs on the temptations, to the falling under which they expoſe their children, becauſe I am ſenſible that thoſe ſlaves of the dirty, ſelfiſh paſſions, never

never have delicacy enough to take that conſideration, all natural as it is, into the accounts: indifferent alike to the miſery and to the guilt of their unhappy offſpring, ſo they but humor their own eternally falſe and deſpicable ideas, which unfortunately the world itſelf is too apt to countenance, in the abandoned turn it has taken to an avarice, which eſtimates every thing, even happineſs itſelf, not by the conſtitutives of perſonal merit, but by ſomething more current at market, articles of fortune.

But what an unnatural ſhocking ſight muſt it be, that of a blooming beauty, allied either with the infirmities of decrepitude, or, with what is perhaps as great a ſource of diſguſt, with an ill temper or diſeaſes at any age, and eſpecially in youth, becauſe there more extraordinary! Is it for parents to exact ſuch ſacrifices from their children?

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Let me give you here an example, which you will hardly think digreſſively introduced. You have not, perhaps, forgot a ſweet little girl, then a child when you took notice of her, about eight years ago, Lucy Harwood, the only daughter of the goldſmith who lived the next door to us: ſhe was, ſince that time, grown ſtrikingly ſightly, with all the glowing freſhneſs of youth, and all the points of female beauty, graced, above every thing, with the moſt engaging modeſty. Happening to be one day at ſome public place, I do not well remember which, where ſhe attracted a general admiration, ſhe had no better luck than to make a conqueſt of one Mudly; a fellow, originally a follower of his father, a cryer of old cloaths, for whom he carried his bag, till by ſome accident he got to be runner to a public office, and there made his way, by no other merit on earth but that of an implicit

plicit ſlave that would run any riſques for thoſe in power to advance him, and would ſet his hand and face to any job or drudgery, the fouler the more welcome to him. With this noble diſpoſition he could hardly fail of ſucceeding, and he accordingly made a conſiderable fortune, originally, by the relaxation of management, and indolent connivence of authority at the waſte and malverſations in offices; but this fortune he ſwelled immoderately, by occaſional hits in the ſtock-jobbing way, and loans to the government, out of the very money of which he had cheated it; loans on occaſions perfectly unneceſſary, if counſels leſs courtly and more national had prevailed. After, then, ſpending the greateſt part of his life in enriching himſelf by ſchemes againſt the public welfare, he began to lay out for pleaſing himſelf, by a project againſt private happineſs. Senſually, then, affected by the

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ſight of Lucy, he ſoon got himſelf introduced to her parents, and without giving himſelf any the leaſt trouble about the girl's inclinations, but with all the cockſure inſolence of the purſe-proud adept of a plum, he propoſed his right honorable intentions. The parents, dazzled with the opulence of this ſon of Rag-fair, thought they could do nothing better for her happineſs than to bury her alive in the arms of that deteſtable lump of mortality. But to give you a juſter idea of the *happineſs* they propoſed for their child, ſuffer me to furniſh you with a deſcription of his perſon, as I am apt to think you never ſaw him.

Figure to yourſelf a little thick ſquab animal, not much above four feet high, with a prominent belly, which, with the ſhortneſs of the inferior part of his body, might give you the idea of a toad ſet on his hind legs, eſpecially if you take into the

the picture a broad, bloated, tawney face, with a wide mouth that had the air of meaning to go round his head, if it had not been luckily ſtopped by his ears, in revenge of which it looked as if it would bite a piece out of them, every time that in ſpeaking he made a contortion with it. Add to this a flat noſe, blubber-lips, eyes goggling like thoſe of a ſtrangled cat, and a greaſy unctuous perſpiration for ever on the ſurface of his phyz, ſomewhat like the ſweating of a vault in ſummer; and, with all this, your imagination can never reach half the horrors of his appearance: be this ſaid without any the leaſt caricature.

The charms of his mind were alſo anſwerable to thoſe of his pretty perſon, which, in all the ſimplicity of good faith, he took for the perfect model of manly beauty. Nor will you think this ſtrange, when I tell you, that, take him out of his

his rote of official buſtle, and the jargon of Change-alley, he had not an idea beyond that money-grubbing ſphere, and was ſcarce not a born ideot, with a head as contracted as his heart, and nothing could be more ſo. Accuſtomed to fawn and crouch to thoſe ſuperiors from whom he had any thing to hope or fear, he indemnified himſelf for that conſtraint by the utmoſt harſhneſs and haughtineſs to thoſe whom occaſions, or their diſaſtrous fortune, had made any way dependent on him. It was then that he would give a full looſe to all the inſolence of his native meanneſs. And yet, with this very wretch I have ſeen ſome of our firſt nobility, cheek-by-jowl, treating him with the utmoſt familiarity, ſlapping him on the ſhoulder, and calling him *honeſt* Tom Mudly! It is true they had borrowed money of him in ſome of thoſe rare moments that his vanity had played his avarice, the trick of rendering him

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leſs ſcrupulous than uſual about ſecurity.

To a girl poſſeſſed of theſe invaluable treaſures of Nature, the graces of youth, beauty, and innocence, and that girl too his own daughter, this was the pretious rich object Mr. Harwood preſented; an object rather leſs preſentable than a Negroe dying of the yaws: for with his death there would be mixed an idea of delivery from him, whereas the diſproportion of this poiſonous monſter's age was not, after all, quite ſo great, as not to threaten ſuch a duration of torture, as was likely to make an end of her firſt. At the bare ſight of him, however, introduced on that footing, Lucy ſhuddered, and recoiled with horror and affright, which he very currently attributed either to her maiden modeſty, or to the overwhelming effect of his delightful perſon, or to both combined. But he did not

long remain under that deception; ſhe preſently let him know her ſentiments of deteſtation of him, with all the ingenuous candor of an age incapable of diſſimulation. In vain had he the mean indelicacy of ſeeking the ſatisfaction of his paſſion, which her refuſal had only the more inflamed, from the arbitary will of her parents, who ſo far complied with his requeſt, that, after remonſtrating to her the duty of unlimited paſſive obedience, after repreſenting to her what ſhe would loſe by her obſtinacy, equipage, jewels, ſide-board of plate, fine cloaths, every thing, in ſhort, of which the poſſeſſion at beſt tires or grows indifferent after a few days, but which with ſuch a condition annexed to it, as that of ſubjection to ſuch a monſter, would become even matter of execration: they concluded, on her non-compliance, with the threat of turning her out of doors, and abandoning her to the wide world. And they were as good as

their

their word: for Lucy, protected by an inſtinct of Nature infinitely wiſer than their inſtigation of falſe opinion, ventured, for the firſt time in her life, to have a will that was not theirs, and perſiſted in rejecting him. The unalterable tenor of her objection to their preſſure was plain and unanſwerable. "I do not love him; "and if I do not love him, I ought not "to marry him; and this is a duty, to "the breach of which no parents ought "to compell or wiſh to ſeduce me." This was her text, and ſhe ſtuck unremoveably to it. Nor was this in her any ſpirit of diſobedience to them, but merely an invincible averſion againſt a man fit to inſpire nothing elſe. Neither had they the common reſource of imputing this refractorineſs in her to any preingagement of heart contrary to her duty. She did not need that circumſtance to fortify her abhorrence of ſo ſhocking an object.

Both father and mother, then, enraged at her wilfully miſſing ſuch a heavenly bargain, literally ſpeaking turned her into the ſtreet, where ſhe muſt have abſolutely fallen upon the chance of Public Charity, or, worſe yet, upon the chance of private vice, if ſhe had not been taken in by a diſtant relation, who, neglected by the family for her poverty, had been occaſionally relieved, in ſecret, by Lucy's natural goodneſs of heart. With her then ſhe was fortunate enough to find a temporary refuge. I was then in Cornwall, or ſhe ſhould not have failed of receiving aſſiſtance from me. The gratefull good woman, not content with only harbouring her, procured her means of ſubſiſtence by the honeſt induſtry of an employ of her talents in embroidery, millinery, and other articles of female work. Nor was it long before ſhe was taken notice of, and courted, by a ſober young tradeſman, of very good morals, that had

had juſt ſucceeded his father, with a competent ſtock, in a floriſhing way of buſineſs, who married her, and to whom ſhe makes a moſt virtuous, diſcreet, and happy wife. It was, however, ſome time before her tender parents would be reconciled to her; and that being the only point wanting to her ſatisfaction, I had the pleaſure at length of ſucceeding, in bringing about the reſtoration of her to their good graces, more for her ſake, you may be ſure, than theirs.

Mean while, what do you think was the opinion of the world in general? To its eternal ſhame, a condemnation of Lucy's conduct; not for diſobedience to her parents: no; but for her having ſtood in her own light, as they vulgarly called it, in not proſtituting herſelf for life, (and ſurely a marriage merely for intereſt deſerves no ſofter name,) and that to a hardly human creature.

I have been glad to particulariſe this example to you, of the falſe and ſordid judgment of the generality of mankind, in points of intereſt ſlighted or trampled upon, becauſe I know that Clara has not eſcaped blame for the many great matches ſhe has refuſed, not indeed with ſuch violent reaſons as Lucy's, but ſurely with full valid ones, in the eyes of nature and of honor, even, if ſhe had had no other plea to offer but her want of ſufficient liking.

I was in a fine writative vein for tiring you to death, but here comes Clara, with impatience in her eyes, to relieve you, me, and herſelf. *(To Clara.)* "What ails the girl? Why do not you "take the pen?"

[*Clara ſits down, reads what Mrs. Buckley has written, and continues the letter, addreſſing herſelf to Mrs Mellefont.*]

Dear

Dear Sister,

IT is very happy for me I am escaping from Mrs. Buckley, who would certainly spoil me, if I was to stay much longer with her, she is so terribly partial to me. I adopt, however, in its whole force, her plea for me, where she has left off, of a want of liking being a sufficient cause to forbid the bans of matrimony: I adopt it too the more readily, for its reducing the whole of that great magnanimity, which she does me the honor of attributing to me, to my only not being jade enough to take the advantage of a transient weakness of a very worthy man, to essentially injure him, to betray a friend, and to dishonor myself; and all this without any temptation; for I never considered as a temptation any views of fortune or ambition; and then as to any liking, that was absolutely out of the question; so that having had nothing to sa-

crifice to my duty, I own, I think it is even injurious to me, to allow me any mighty merit for my procedure, as if it had been juſt or natural to expect any other from any one that was not totally unprincipled.

As for fortune, I neither meanly wiſh it, nor give myſelf the air of falſe heroics to deſpiſe it: nay, for many obvious reaſons, but eſpecially for the good it inables one to do, I rather hold it a deſirable object; only I think it may, like gold, be bought too dear, at the expence either of honor, or of thoſe points of happineſs which it is eternally out of its power to give, or to ſupply their place, though it may and often does deſtroy them. Content with my humble mediocrity, and having enough, what miſs can I feel of the more that I do not want? With my taſte for retirement and ſimplicity of life, in every thing, any ſuperfluity,

ity, as to myſelf, would rather perplex than pleaſe me: I might, indeed, wiſh greater circumſtances, for the ſake of my friends; but, thank Heaven, I have none that are in want, or that would not be ſorry to profit by any advantages to me that were incompatible with my happineſs: I might wiſh a more affluent fortune for the ſake of relieving the poor or diſtreſſed, but that duty never exacting more than a proportion to one's actual abilities, does not require improper ſacrifices to intereſt; and ſurely no ſacrifice could be more improper, than that of a duty ſo inviolable as of never marrying till the heart can join with the mouth, in pronouncing the ſacramental word of Love, not as mere matter of ceremony, but as a ſolemn truth.

As to ambition, for example, of a title; it is not barely matter of indifference to me, for it is without any the leaſt

affectation I can aver, that I have rather a ſtrong prejudice againſt that diſtinction; eſpecially as, in my ſmall ſphere of obſervation, it has appeared to me to be generally, I do not ſay neceſſarily, an unfavorable one. To perſons of real merit it adds no ſort of luſtre; while to the worthleſs, it ſeems rather to throw a light on them, that directs the pointed finger of ſcorn to its mark; as ſurely where a title is unfilled, (and how few of them are not ſo?) the ſtrongeſt contempt is even a duty. In ſhort, I am almoſt tempted to ſubſcribe, without reſerve, to Mr. Mellefont's opinion, "That titles "are remains of Gothicism, antiquated "forms of appellation, the ſound of "which having long ſurvived the ſenſe, "remain in vulgar uſe, without founda-"tion, or meaning, and merely by the "force of preſcription. In ſhort, as ti-"tles now ſtand, and conſidering the "perſons on whom they are com-

"monly

" monly pinned, they appear abſurdities,
" to which cuſtom is ſo far from recon-
" ciling one, that it is only a provoca-
" tion the more to diſguſt and deriſion."

I confeſs, too, that I have been a good deal confirmed in theſe ideas by the company of that rank I ſaw while I ſtaid at Lady Lovell's, who did not, however, receive worſe characters than the common run of people of quality, and whoſe rote of life ſeemed to me one continued ſcene of wretched trifling. It even hurt me to ſee them reduced to ſuch poor ſhifts for diſpoſing of their worthleſs leiſure, when, by choice, taking refuge from the ſad irkſomneſs of not knowing what to do with themſelves, in parties at cards, which one would imagine rather enjoined for a penance, than a recourſe for amuſement, being neither recommendable for mirth, nor for exerciſe of body or of mind. It is, in truth, and

without any the leaſt caricature, hardly poſſible to conceive any thing more trivial, more inſipid, or more numbingly ſtupid than their aſſembly-nights, when every card-table appears an altar erected to Idleneſs and Dullneſs, at which the celebration of the ſervice is at once worthy of the Divinities, and of ſuch votaries as are capable of ſacrificing time and taſte to them. Lady Harriet uſed to call thoſe ridiculous routs the States-general of Nonſenſe, and the perſon who gave the entertainment, their Stadtholder for the Night.

Motives, then, of fortune and ambition being quite out of the queſtion of my non-acceptance of Lord Soberton's offers, there remains only for me to ſtate my want of liking, which, rendering it no ſelf-denial, reduces to nothing any pretention to merit from it, and leaves it in the rank of ordinary procedure. For nothing

nothing is more certain, than that he had not inſpired me with any the leaſt inclination to enter into a partnerſhip of his wrong. Not that he wanted merit. I know no man on earth that has more, or with whoſe friendſhip I ſhould think myſelf more honored; but having never viewed him in any light but that of a man equivalent to married to my intimate friend, he had never coſt my heart the queſtion how it ſtood affected to him, in the point of a more tender ſentiment.

I ſhall then, dear ſiſter, be with you ſoon, and carry down a heart as clear and as free as I brought it to town, and as it is my ſincere wiſh to preſerve it, without airs, without affectation, without prudery. This my wiſh is the produce of my fear. I am but too ſenſible of the nature of the paſſions not to dread their violence, and not to put my heart, of the weakneſs of which I am but too juſtly

ly diffident, as much as poſſible on its guard againſt thoſe enemies to its tranquillity and content.

Here I ſhould, of my real grief and concern for parting from the worthy Mrs. Buckley, whom I love and honor beyond expreſſion, ſay more, but that ſhe is to read this letter before I cloſe it. As to yourſelf, and Mr. Mellefont, I flatter myſelf I am arrived with you to the pitch of not needing profeſſions or formularies of compliment.

Yours, &c.

CLARA MAYNWARING.

LETTER XXXII.

From Mr. MELLEFONT *to Mrs.* BUCKLEY.

Lancaſhire.

AS your laſt letter, dear aunt, included an acknowledgment of the packet having come to your hand, which contained, together with the advice of Clara's ſafe arrival, our joint retribution of the moſt grateful thanks for all your kindneſſes and favors to her, I ſhould not, perhaps, have troubled you ſo ſoon afterwards, but for the indiſpenſable duty of my conſidering every requeſt of your's as a command. That indeed of my acquainting you of any incident materially relative to Clara, carries

carries with it ſo great a pleaſure, that it robs me of any merit of obedience.

Something then having happened, in which Clara ſeems more deeply intereſted than probably even ſhe herſelf ſuſpects, I ſeize the occaſion of giving you an account of it, but am obliged to introduce it with ſome preliminary lights.

About three or four months ago, Mr. Sumners, an Officer, who had been put on the half-pay on the cloſe of the laſt war, came into this part of the country, and took a neat ſnug lodging at a Farmer's, ſcarce a mile and a half diſtant from my houſe. At that time I had not any the leaſt acquaintance with him, and, indeed, he was little, if at all, known to any of the neighbourhood; a circumſtance which had been one of his principal motives for the choice of this receſs, where he propoſed to wait the return of a ſon, who was abſent in Holland,

land, on ſome buſineſs. His turn for ſolitude, independently of his having long ſeen the world with eyes rather of diſlike than of only indifference, was alſo, in part, owing to a languiſhing ſtate of health, from the wounds he had received at the battle of Quebec, and of which he had never been well recovered.

He had not been there long, before he was expoſed to the indignity of a diſtreſs by the failure of a remittance of his pay, through the infidelity of a Caſhier to Mr. Stanley, a very worthy Hamborough Merchant, and conſtant friend of his, to whom Mr. Sumners had entruſted that concern, and in whoſe compting-houſe, Mr. Sumners, his ſon, had been indulged admittance, there to take a tincture of Merchant's accompts, and of commercial notions; in which ſituation he had contracted a ſtrict friendſhip with his ſon, who, it ſeems, went lately

lately to Hamborough, on ſome affairs relative to trade. It was, then, on this failure, that, for a debt far from conſiderable, incurred by the purchaſe of a horſe and chaiſe, this worthy Gentleman was arreſted, when in a country where he was an intire ſtranger, he was, for want of immediate bail, or at leaſt of ſuch bail as he himſelf did not chuſe to incur an obligation by accepting, carried to a common jail; upon which he wrote immediately a tender expoſtulation to Mr. Stanley, who had not till juſt that inſtant diſcovered his Caſhier's imbezzlements. On receipt of this letter, Mr. Stanley was not content with immediately ſending down expreſs the requiſite relief, with ample reparation of damages, but came down in perſon to make an apology, and ſatisfy Mr. Sumners of his innocence; nor would he be perſuaded of his forgiveneſs, till he had conſented to an arrangement, that ſhould thence-

thence-forward make such another accident, humanly speaking, an impossibility.

And here, dear aunt, on the occasion of my mentioning the treatment of Mr. Sumners, in his being so unnecessarily and yet not illegally thrown into prison, forgive me, in favor of humanity, a digressive reflexion on the impolitic cruelty of our laws, in authorising, under such little restriction, those burial-places of our fellow-creatures alive, incomparably oftener sacrificed to the cruel humor or to the revenge of mercileſs creditors, than to the calls of justice. I am ready to grant, that some debtors do not deserve a less punishment than common highway-men, their means of coming at the money of honest tradesmen, or of others, by fraud, or circumvention, being not a whit less detrimental, and much more odious, than by open violence; but if you would set against these villainous debtors those insidious

dious creditors, who have by deſign, by artifice, by taking the advantage of ignorance and inexperience, brought unfortunate objects under their clutches, by the letter of the law againſt its ſpirit, and I fancy you would find the account of fraudulent debtors, in contraſt to unjuſt creditors, ſo nearly ballanced, as to afford no fair argument in favor of the leaſt humane ſide; eſpecially if it be conſidered, that it would be more eligible for ten of the guilty to eſcape, than for one innocent perſon to ſuffer. This would clearly reduce the ſtate of the queſtion to the point for which I would contend, that Debtors, generally ſpeaking, (and it is from generals and not from exceptions that concluſions are to be drawn, or laws framed) cannot, in the eyes of humanity, and eſpecially of juſtice, the glory of which is never to be at variance with humanity, for whoſe ſake it came into exiſtence, deſerve of

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all deaths the moſt horrid and the moſt torturous, that of periſhing, as ſuch numbers actually do, in the dreary dungeons of legal captivity, by a ſickly languor more intolerable than the moſt acute pains, by atrophy, by inanition, and eſpecially by affliction and deſpair.

But perhaps I exagerate. The term "torturous" may appear over-ſtrained, or declamatory. It can only appear ſo to thoſe who either do not think at all, or are deſtitute of human feelings. Conſult any phyſician of ſkill and ability, and I dare aver, that he will eaſily ſatisfy you, that the ſufferings of the body, and the anguiſh of the mind, in the proceſs of a confinement, under its generally concomitant circumſtances of penury, cold, hunger, filth, want of free air and exerciſe, hardſhips of all kinds, and eſpecially corroſive grief for the coolneſs or deſertion of tired-out friends, with, in ſhort,

ſhort, all the train of thoſe evils, from the very idea of which humanity ſhrinks with horror, altogether form a complication of torture, compared to which any other torture muſt appear light, eſpecially if you ſet the duration of the one againſt the ſharpneſs of the ſharpeſt imaginable.

Dogs gnawing one's joints; the having every limb broken with an iron bar, and the being afterwards coiled alive round a wheel, with the head hanging down; the cutting open the bowels of a man and faſtening them to a windlaſs, to be ſpun forth for the amuſement of tender-hearted ſpectators; or the Perſian device of a puniſhment for ſome enormous criminal, by confining him to receive the falling of water ſlowly, drop by drop, on his bare head, cloſe ſhaved, till, with the extremity of that exquiſite torture, he raves, deſpairs, and dies, afford ſome image,

image, though a faint inadequate one, of that ſlow but excruciating pain, not only of the body by various hardſhips, but worſe than of the body, of the ſpirit, under which it is even a familiar event for ſo many poor cloſe confined wretches to pine away, in their execrable immurement, in ſuch a manner, that daſhing their brains out againſt the priſon-walls would comparatively be a tender mercy, or a death-warrant an act of clemency.

Certainly, certainly the deaths which are the moſt terrible to behold are not the moſt terrible to endure. That gloomy remorſeleſs tirant Tiberius, who might have given leſſons of cruelty to an Inquiſitor-General, hugged himſelf for the idea of ſavoring his revenge in the making his priſoners die by inches, and feel their death, which, on its coming, at length, he envied them, as an eſcape from him.

And,

And, in fact, the worſt kind of execution is the civil one, by a length of torments, which ſo often makes death be invoked, and ſometimes deſperately reſorted to, as a deliverance. "I cannot, "indeed," (ſaid a ſtony-hearted Arabian, and ſighed,) "hang my debtor," (but then he added, with a ſmile, on reflexion,) "I can do more, I can make him hang "himſelf." This is what the Pſalmiſt ſo emphatically calls and curſes, "*ſlaying* "*the broken heart.*"

A pound of human fleſh, cut out near the heart, would ſatisfy the gentle Jew of Venice; but nothing leſs than the bleeding heart itſelf, and torn heart-ſtrings, will glut the white-livered revenge and inveteracy of ſome Chriſtian Shylocks, who prophane, with a palpable mockery, the Lord's Prayer, by the daily repetition of what ſo ſolemnly condemns them. And yet, that it is but juſt for

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the Law to lend its hand to gratify this bleſſed humor is contended for by ſome of our Law-puritans, with all the rigor of the righteous over much, and with all the inſenſibility preſumable of ſuch as can loathſomely prey on the diſtreſſes of their fellow-creatures.

As the Law now ſtands, it would hang a creditor that ſhould take upon him to murder his debtor in a compendious way; as if envying him the office of executioner, it choſe to take it out of his hands, only to put the unfortunate debtor to a more lingering torturous death, by burying him alive in the receptacle it has provided for him to rot in by inches. And this in complaiſance to a phantom uſurping the name and form of Juſtice. For ſurely it is not the leſs true for its being proverbially trite, that a priſon pays no debts. At leaſt for one that it recovers, it cancells and de-

ſtroys a thouſand. And yet the original intention of juſtice in providing ſuch places of durance, was purely to compel the able and unwilling to pay, but never to puniſh unfortunate inſolvents, or to make their inability more deſperate by laying them under greater diſtreſs. A Lord Chancellor of England, at once a humane Judge and great Patriot, uſed to ſay, he could hardly conceive a debt ſo great that a year's cloſe impriſonment ought not to ſatisfy; and yet ſo literally true is the ſaying, even in this ſenſe, that a jail pays no debt, that no length of that horrid puniſhment is taken into the account of the diſcharge, or reckoned part of payment.

But how happy for creditors, in general, would it be, if the Law was, even for their greater proſpect of relief and benefit, as tender of the liberty of the ſubject, as it affects to be of his property; if juſtice, in ſhort, diſdaining

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to humor, and especially to be the tool of their vindictiveness, would consult their interest more, and indulge their blind passions less! Between the creditor and his debtor, it is unquestionably the creditor that is entitled to the most favor. He is the party aggrieved. But is it any real favor to him, to abet his folly in increasing the inability of a debtor, or to minister to his cruelty in murthering him, after trusting him, perhaps, injudiciously, or with a view to make a property of him by extraordinary profits?

Can the White-wash, as it is in derision termed, of some even base and fraudulent wretches, not preventively enough guarded against by the Law, and sheltering themselves under an act intended for a general benefit, but, like all other human acts, liable to partial abuses and inconveniencies, be big with a blacker train of horrors, than the letting such multitudes

of thoſe who are only unfortunate, daily periſh in jail, and worſe than needleſsly periſh, to the reproach of Juſtice and of Humanity? or can there be a more execrably falſe reaſon oppoſed to the putting an end to the tortures of the innocent, than its opening a door for the guilty to eſcape them; if any one can properly be called guilty enough to deſerve worſe than death itſelf?

I have begun with fairly granting, what I here repeat, that there are debtors, who, for the villainous nature of their premeditated frauds in contracting their debts, or for their baſeneſs in eluding the payment of an honeſt worthy creditor, who is perhaps himſelf ruined, and liable to a jail, for their failure, deſerve death equally, or rather more, than thoſe who rob on the highway; and yet, I think, that the death by that lingering torture, to which ſome of thoſe victims

victims to their own villainy are so often brought, is rather too much. But be that as it may, to infer from their guilt any expedience of involving those clear of it in a parity of punishment, is at once to renounce justice, humanity, and common sense. To take it for granted that the Law cannot provide proper distinctions, is to suppose Justice too blind, too unfeeling, or too indolent to make them.

Unhappily the tricking debtor has too often a better bargain of a debt incurred by fraud and treachery, than the honest debtor betraid into his distress by mere misfortune, by error of judgment, or by silly thoughtlessness. The first being commonly better prepared than the other, and living on the creditor's substance as long as it will last; while the other starves on his innocence of so base a design: Sometimes the creditor will have laid the foundation of his right by law to his suit

of impriſonment, in having wronged, circumvented, or inſnared him, in which caſe the villainous creditor is always the moſt unmerciful. How many objects, at this inſtant, of both ſexes, are, for want of means to prove their innocence of the debts for which they are ſuffering their torments, periſhing under them! But putting their caſe at the beſt; that they can at length make their wrongs and falſe impriſonment appear; what Jury can eſtimate their paſt groans, or the floods of tears their oppreſſion will have coſt their families? What ſufficient damages can be given for the vexation of ſpirit or the agonies of grief? and yet this is a diſtreſs much more common than is imagined, or than the Law can redreſs.

But even among thoſe, who, on their firſt entrance into thoſe manſions of miſery, before they will have conſumed what had wrongfully eſcaped, their creditors, and

and before their heart comes to be broken by a length of confinement, affect airs of bravade and unconcern; among even thoſe, I ſay, it is eaſy to obſerve, that their feſtivity is loathſomely forced, and their convivial jollitry aukward and unnatural. You may plainly perceive in all their diſmally acted mirth, to which they have recourſe by way of ſtunning their ſenſe of their condition, a funereal countenance, and the horror of a ghaſtly ſmile; a mirth, in ſhort, to which the faint flame of falſe ſpirits gives a diſcolored ſnap-dragon hue, that makes them look as if they were celebrating their own funeral obſequies, or ſinging dirges at the burial-ſervice of themſelves in thoſe graves for the quick, which may, ſooner than they imagine, make them ſigh for the graves of the dead.

Amidſt, however, the conſideration of all theſe abſurd horrors, it was not with-

out ſome pleaſure that my reſearches into the antiquities of Britain led me to the diſcovery, that this infernal proceſs, by impriſoning human creatures in dungeons, for civil debts, was a practice unknown to thoſe times of ſimplicity and humanity, to which the great bulwarks of liberty, the Trials by Juries, and other privileges of the common law, can be traced. This impolitic, ſenſeleſs, barbarous cuſtom, was, ſtrictly ſpeaking, imported into this iſland, together with its ſlavery, under imperial Rome, when her aſſimilative policy bred ſo great a change in the laws, manners, cuſtoms, and religion of the Britiſh natives. And yet I have great reaſon to think it was ſo little agreeable to their genius and ſpirit, that it was aboliſhed on the Romans withdrawing their forces, though it came afterwards to be revived by ſubſequent alterations of the forms of Law, in imitation of thoſe of the Continent.

But

But do not imagine from this, that the ſecurity of private credit was neglected by our more antient laws, before this baneful exotic plant of remorſeleſs tiranny took ultimately root. The goods of the creditors were liable to ſeizure, but the human liberty was deemed too ſacred to be alienable for debt. A man could no more engage his liberty than his life. Private property, inherited or acquired, was conſidered as belonging to the ſubject, and as ſuch was transferrable and ſeizable on private ſuit; but the ſubjects theirſelves were held to belong abſolutely to their country, and as ſuch were ſolely at her diſpoſal, according to her want of them, for the occupations of peace, or of war. Throwing them into priſon was robbing the public hive. The country was held the preferable creditor.

But where there was any room to judge the debtor fraudulent, or contu-

macious, in the ſecreting or withholding lawful ſatisfaction with his goods; he was not only, by a judicial proceſs, rendered the object of public infamy and ſcorn, but driven out, by a civil excommunication, from ſociety, and finally out-lawed. He was under a kind of interdiction of fire and water, till juſtice was ſatisfied of his inſolvency being involuntary, a misfortune and not a guilt. Thus were the rights of creditors deemed ſo ſacred, that the payment of debts was held even a religious duty.

This diſpoſition, dear aunt, exiſted actually in thoſe times, repreſented, by even very good authors, as times of barbariſm, in which the Britons were ſuppoſed to be much ſuch ſavages as the Cheroquees or Catawbas of North-America, though nothing is more true than that all that is the moſt excellent, in our preſent conſtitution and laws, derives

derives to us from thoſe very pretended ſavages, who were ſo unciviliſed as to place the law above the ſword, the greateſt honor of which was, its being the guard of the law, and ſubordinate to it. Theſe were the times in which Mr. Buckley plainly demonſtrated to me, that the feodial ſyſtem was in reign before it was ſupplanted by the feodal one, and that what of liberty we now enjoy is owing to the former, though we ſtill retain too great a mixture of the latter. This, too, in one capital point, we have greatly corrupted, or at leaſt put on a very falſe footing; the ſubſtitution of regiments, formed by general levies out of the maſs of the people, to the antient provincial militias, which were attended with incomparably greater advantages. But, to enter on a diſcuſſion of this would be a digreſſion within a digreſſion.

To return, then, to the ſubject of civil proceſs, in the caſe of debt. Let me here indulge the ſatisfaction of doing juſtice to a virtue wherever it is found. The French, who had from the Romans adopted the inhuman practice of throwing men into jail for inſolvency, adopted it, however, with greater modification than we, and eſpecially with one that does honor to their humanity. No man, after ſeventy years of age, is liable, as I am told, to perſonal impriſonment for debt, or can be held to it, if already in cuſtody. The priſon-doors are ſet open to him; and this, on the tender conſideration, that to the infirmity and helpleſſneſs of that ſeaſon of life, it would be cruelty to add the miſeries of confinement. Old age has, in that reſpect, the privilege of its ſecond childhood.

However, it is devoutly to be wiſhed, ſince it is not, in the preſent prevalent hardneſs

hardneſs of the human heart to be hoped, that this inveterate abuſe may receive at leaſt ſome mitigation, and that the laws, on that point, as they now ſtand, may be reſtored, in as great a meaſure as the general good will admit, to their antient humanity, and ſpirit of tenderneſs, for private liberty, in which public liberty has ſo great an intereſt. An amendment which might be atchieved without any ſort of wound to private credit, that life of commerce, which is but the better provided for by the Bankrupt laws. Our periodical Acts of Inſolvency, notwithſtanding ſome particular inſtances of their being abuſed, favor, in general, this opinion. If that Act of Humanity is juſt at one time, what valid reaſon can there be aſſigned for its not being ſo at all times? Or ſhould Humanity not keep an even tenor, but be exerciſed only by fits and ſtarts; on occaſions, too, where ſuch acts are rather unmeaning, temporary

rary compliments to power, than favors of juſtice to the cauſe of human-kind?

It is not, dear aunt, that I have thus run into a digreſſion unawares. I meant one, but not quite ſo long a one as that into which I have been betrayed by the matter of it; a fault, for the pardon of which I dare rely on the interceſſion of your heart. You will only be ſorry that ſo good a cauſe is not in better hands, for the ſake of your darling ſpirit of humanity, to which it will be but an incentive the more, the conſideration of the unfaſhionableneſs of the ſubject. If the great are treated as they deſerve for their paltry worthleſſneſs, or their deſpicable follies, thouſands of ſtupid ſicophants and dirty time-ſervers are up in arms to curry favor with them, by repelling the attack, and by imputing it to mean envy. And who are theſe they pretend are ſo envied,

but

but ſuch as are more properly objects of pity? Or elſe they aſcribe it to a cinic inſolence, when the truth is, that the want of reſpect is to one's ſelf, in deſcending ſo low as to deign to unimadvert on them. Of advocates, then, perfectly worthy of them, they need fear no ſcarcity: there are always enow to ſtep forth champions of the happy rich; but who takes the part of the unfortunate poor? Or who interceeds for humanity, expiring under lingering tortures? Expiring obſcurely, unheeded, and eſpecially to not one valuable purpoſe of juſtice or example.

Mr. Sumners, then, after his recovering his liberty, reſumed his habitation at the farmer's, who had behaved to him with great tenderneſs and ſenſibility, inſomuch as to offer to be his bail or ſecurity, which Mr. Sumners declined with, perhaps, too much delicacy.

cacy. His chief amuſement uſed to be reading, angling, or ſhooting. It was on the occaſion of the laſt that I happened to fall into his way, when, without too abrupt an impoliteneſs, of which his character was unſuſceptible, he could not well avoid joining company with me. It was, then, that the little I ſaw of him gave me a great deſire of his acquaintance, which it was not, however, without ſome difficulty, and the ſacrifice of ſignal advances on my ſide, that I could obtain. But I was, in truth, richly overpaid for my pains. I have converſed with many, but never, in my life, met with ſuch univerſal knowledge of men and things. He had been in the army from his infancy, and all the hours of leiſure from the duty, ſtudy, and occupations of his profeſſion, he had devoted to the cultivation of literature without pedantry, and of politics without party. And this turn was the

more

more meritorious in him, for his being perfectly ſure that acquiſitions of that kind were, in theſe times, more likely to be prejudicial than ſerviceable to him. But, independently of his being ſtrongly impelled by his taſte to the cultivation of his underſtanding, he had collaterally another object in it. This was the education of his only and darling ſon: which he held too ſacred an imcumbence to truſt to any one but himſelf. Accordingly he made a conſcience of previouſly ſatisfying himſelf, not only of every truth, but of the degree of value of every truth that he taught him, together with the manner of examining it by the lights of his own underſtanding. He recommended eſpecially to him, the propriety and, indeed, the modeſty of that kind of rational ſcepticiſm, which ſuſpends deciſion till fair judgment ſhall have warranted it; warning him eſpecially againſt the dangerous ſervility of too implicit aſſent.

Having

Having been ordered early to America with the national troops; his wife, the daughter of a Merchant of the city, whom he had married with little or no fortune, but who, it ſeems, made ample amends for that deficiency in the amiableneſs of her perſon and character, would not ſuffer him to proceed without her, and Leonard Sumners, their ſon, then a mere child. She did not, however, ſurvive but a few days her landing in that country, being carried off by a diſtemper, too often fatal to new-comers. By this misfortune the care of the ſon devolved entirely on Captain Sumners, and he acquitted himſelf moſt worthily of it. It was in the midſt of the wilds of America, and of all the fatigues of his duty, that his ſweeteſt relief and refreſhment was to accompliſh this boy, at all points, and to give every virtue the beſt chance, by being the firſt in poſſeſſion of his heart; not content with

forming

forming which, he proceeded to ſtore his head with ſolid and eſſential knowledge in proportion to his growing ſuſceptibility of inſtruction, which to judge of it by what Mr. Sumners related, as ſimple matter of fact, with great modeſty, muſt have been prodigious.

To theſe accompliſhments, he added that of accuſtoming him early to all the manly exerciſes, in a way to give hardineſs to his conſtitution, and to inure him to fatigues. In theſe exerciſes he grew ſo amazing a proficient, that, without any prejudice to his ſtudies, from which theſe were indulged him as relaxations, he came to ſurpaſs the ſavages themſelves in all the points of bodily agility, dexterity, and valor, which they eſteem ſo eſſential a part of perſonal merit. He was barely fourteen when he could outſtrip the fleeteſt of them at running, or

defy

defy them to out-ſwim him in the roughest lakes, or croſs the ſtream at a tremendouſly ſmall diſtance from the fall of Niagara; nor could one of them excell him as a markſman, whether with the bow or the gun. He was not ſuperior to them only in the chace of the fox, the mooſe, or the elk, but would attack with more open intrepidity the bear and the panther. His father had often to tremble for his over-raſhneſs in emulation, and in his daringly provoking dangers; and yet could not find in his heart to damp his courage by reſtraining it.

However, juſt on the point of engaging in a ſkirmiſh with the French, ſome time before the ſiege of Quebec, his paternal tenderneſs had ſo far prevailed over him, that, though Leonard was tall and well formed for his years, he judged his age was a ſufficient diſpenſation from expoſing him to the chances

of

of war. On this motive of caution, before he went himſelf, he gave his ſon in charge to a truſty old ſavage, with ſpecial order to keep him from the field till the action was over. But while Mr. Sumners was in the heat of it, he was not a little ſurpriſed, nor indeed a little concerned, to find his boy, with his little muſquet and bayonet, fighting cloſe at his ſide, crying, "Courage, father! I "am with you." The ſolution of this ſudden appearance was, that, in the noble impetuoſity of his martial ardor, he had, without ſtanding upon ceremony, knocked down the ſavage, who had not ſtood in the leaſt on his guard, and whom he left ſprawling, while ſnatching up his arms he flew to the ſcene of battle, and ſoon diſcovering where his father was engaged, gave him the terrible pleaſure of ſeeing him at his ſide.

But he afforded him a much more pure joy, when, after the combat was ceaſed,

ceaſed, by the victory declaring entirely on our ſide, Captain Sumners ſaw him buſied in nothing but aſſiſting the wounded, as they lay on the field, and aſſiſting them, without any diſtinction of friend or enemy. He did more. As a French officer, left wounded on the field, was begging his life of one of our ſoldiers, the brute had twice ſnapped his piſtol, which twice miſgave, to blow out his brains; at ſight of which, as he was prepared to make a third trial, Leonard puſhed his hand aſide, juſt as he was preſenting the piſtol a-freſh at the unfortunate officer. The ſoldier, enraged at this, turned the muzzle of it towards him, and firing it, the piſtol this time went off, and the balls juſt grazing Leonard's head, went through his hat. At this, and at his cowardly cruelty to a ſuppliant enemy, his own comrades were ſo moved with indignation, that to a man clubbing their muſquets, they knocked him

him down, and would infallibly have drubbed him to death, if Leonard had not effectually interpoſed to ſave him. After which, giving the ſoldiers a trifle to drink, he protected the French officer from being plundered, and leading him off the field, preſented him as his priſoner to his father, by whom he was treated with the utmoſt tenderneſs and civility.

As to the poor ſavage, whom the blow given him by Leonard, to take off his oppoſition to his eſcape, had only ſtunned, with very little hurt, he not only begged his pardon, (which the other, the cauſe conſidered, readily granted him, with tears of joy to ſee him ſafe returned,) but gave him a very fine muſquet, and a complete cloathing from head to foot.

In relating this ſtory, I will not ſay that a father's juſt pride in ſo humane and valiant a ſon, eſpecially at his age, might

might not have ſome ſhare; but it is certain, that he gave, at leaſt, ſo great a part of the praiſe to the gallantry and native generoſity of ſpirit in the Britiſh ſoldiers, that it could not be ſaid he was not glad to introduce the narrative for the ſake of doing juſtice to the virtues of his countrymen.

At the battle of Quebec, his ſon, though barely fifteen, greatly diſtinguiſhed himſelf in that memorable action, when poor Wolfe, after having in his laſt official letter to the Secretary of State, pathetically and juſtly lamented his having been ſent a ſacrifice, ſealed with his blood, the conſummation of his complaint, falling himſelf the victim in the boſom of a victory, gained by a raſh but neceſſary ſtroke of deſpair.

It was at this battle, that, while gallantly doing his duty, Captain Sumners received two gun-ſhot wounds, the one

one with a ball that went quite through his body, not without a conſiderable offence, in its paſſage to the noble parts: the other was with another ball, that, not going through, lodged a little above the loins, but ſo that it could never be extracted. The conſequences of theſe wounds were a total inability to continue the military profeſſion, which he, therefore, quitted to return home, and retire on half-pay; under a languid infirm ſtate of body, with few intervals from pains, and thoſe at times very acute ones, which he bore with the moſt manly patience.

On a conſideration of the ſufferings of this worthy Gentleman, and of the mediocrity of his recompence for them, in the ſtreights of half-pay, I could not, without indignation, help comparing his hard fate with that of ſome of the national leeches that had fattened on the blood

of the war; and whoſe monſtrous fortunes, the produce of their country abandoned by the negligence of its Government to their unmerciful depredations, were at once a public ſcandal and calamity. What a contraſt! Behold, on one hand, a true gentleman, and gallant Officer, dying, by inches, of wounds received in the acquittal of his duty to his country, or expoſed to periſh in a jail; and on the other, ſome dirty, low-born wretch, in virtue of a happy hit of calculation, or of ſome vile contractor's job, given him through ignorance or breach of the public truſt, by the intereſt of ſome man of power as worthleſs as himſelf; behold ſuch a one, I ſay, without having ſo much as ſeen the ſhadow of the dangers of war, rioting in the ſpoils of it, and inſulting his own plundered country with gorgeous equipages, glittering ſide-boards of plate, and purchaſes of eſtates of which the unfortunate owners were reduced to the ſale,

by

by their being involved in the common misery of the times, brought on by the politics and management of those who made those fortunes, or were the cause of their being made.

Sometimes indeed Mr. Sumners would, in the midst of his pains, say, with even an unforced smile, that it was at least some mitigation of torture to him, to reflect that he had received his wounds in the cause of his country, and not in serving against it, like the unfortunate troops in Germany, whose valor was so cruelly misemployed on the very side diametrically opposite to the clearest interest of their country; on the side of, at bottom, the greatest friend to our greatest enemy; on the side of a Prince, from whose head had proceeded that transient hurricane, which, without any good to himself, had done so much mischief to mankind. Of this fatal epoch of false policy, with all its

ſucceſſes in its train, ſo juſtly contemptible on the crazy foundations which had been laid for them, Mr. Sumners could never ſpeak but with a virtuous and truly patriotic indignation. Conſequently thereto, this conſideration it was, that a brave and loyal ſubject, ſerving in the army, might, at the will of a worthleſs or corrupt miniſtry, ſupported by a deceived, or implicit Parliament, be ſent on the moſt deplorable of all errands, on abſurd, ſenſeleſs, ruinous expeditions on the Continent, ſuch as undoubtedly our laſt was, that made him diſinclined to have his ſon liable or ſubjected to that horror, by his continuing in the army.

With all his profound regard, too, for diſcipline, which he looked upon as one of the moſt indiſpenſable eſſentials of military force, he had, by reflexion, contracted a ſovereign diſlike of the army on the footing it ſtands at preſent. He obſerved

to

to me, that the French had been totally inſlaved by the regular bands ſtolen in upon their conſtitution, which bad, very bad as it was before, compacted of a number of petty feodal tirants, was rendered ſtill infinitely worſe by the power centering in a ſingle hand, which turned the ſtate itſelf into a mere ſtratocracy, of which the King was Generaliſſimo, and in that quality was inveſted with all the terrors of a military deſpotiſm, and ſet above the Law, which was degraded into its tool and ſupport. Whereas in Britain it had not, indeed, as yet, produced that ever execrable effect, ſlavery, thanks to the ſpirit and genius of liberty, ſo innate to Britons: but that it undoubtedly was, at bottom, the principal cauſe, direct and indirect, of that moſt enormous evil, the overwhelming preſſure of the national debt. This, he obſerved, had brought on a worſe ſtate than that of beggary, which if not, as yet, ſlavery,

had a manifeſt tendency to reduce us to it. That in the mean while, all the deſtructive cauſes were proceeding in full operation againſt us, without any thing material, or worth mentioning, ſo much as thought of to counter-act them. On the contrary, we were inſenſibly entering into perdition, and that ſo imminent, that a man of any foreſight, might, with tolerable juſtneſs, calculate the moment of the cataſtrophe, unleſs ſome truly nationals, men of real worth and honor, touched with a ſalutary ſenſe of the dangers of their bleeding country, ſhould, ere yet too late, reſolutely riſe to her reſcue, and join in earneſt, to put the conſtitutional energy and powers into motion, and away with all this loathſome infernal nonſenſe under which ſhe is ſo ſhamefully ſinking. To ſuch virtuous ſubjects, poſts would appear only deſirable as occaſions of public ſervice, or rewards of approved merit, not the vile proſtituted

baits

baits of avarice, in which even ambition itſelf is abſorbed. His reaſons for this opinion were demonſtrative ones, but it would be here too much out of place to ſpecify them to you.

As to that great movement of the ſtate, the neceſſary military force, he averred himſelf ready to make it as clear as the ſun, that a militia, equivalent to the army, was perfectly practicable, and that there was no end attainable by an army that was not equally ſo by a well eſtabliſhed conſtitutional militia, ſomething in the nature of that in Switzerland. Of which, by the by, it is to be noted, that one ſingle Canton, land-locked and ſurrounded as their country is by Papiſt-powers, itſelf at a diſtance of the ſea, with hardly any trade or manufactures, could not only, in virtue of its militia, defend itſelf, but by the moderation, probity, management, and patriotiſm of

its government, keep out of debt, nay, amaſs the aſtoniſhing ſum, for ſuch a ſtate, of more than a million and a half ſterling, to throw into the funds of a nation, who had fifty times the reaſon, from advantages natural and acquired, to have twenty or thirty millions at leaſt in ſtore, inſtead of groaning under the load of a hundred and forty millions ſterling, not a ſingle ſhilling of which was ever borrowed on any exigency, but that of a falſe and unnational policy, on various pretences, palmed by a deſigning Court, on a generous, brave, and credulous people. A candidly commented hiſtory of the ſaid debt, conducted thro' every parliamentary mortgage of the national revenue, would, to the impartial, prove this aſſertion, beyond a doubt.

All this, together with ſome perſonal obſervations on the preferences of intereſt to merit, and on the bad conſtitu-

tion

tion in general of the military eſtabliſh-ment, made him peremptorily take his ſon out of the army, and truſt his future fortune to ſome civil or mercantile em-ployment. In this laſt view he had placed him, as before-mentioned, in a friend's compting-houſe, where he was, when he ſent him to Holland, on ſome buſineſs, which I ſhould imagine could not be very extraordinary, as in his men-tion of it, he ſeemed to lay no ſtreſs on the iſſue.

His ſon had not been long gone be-fore the incident of his arreſt, which I am apt to think he did not write to him, for fear of giving him an uneaſineſs that might interfere in his buſineſs, or bring him back prematurely. To the beſt of my remembrance, he ſlightly hinted this to me, in ſome of his more open mo-ments. For in virtue of that unfeigned reſpect for him, with which he could not

but be ſenſible that he had inſpired me, I had the honor of being admitted not only to the pleaſure and profit of converſing with him, but even to ſome ſhare of his confidence. In the courſe of it he had hiſtorically, and always with great indifference, not to ſay contempt, introduced the mention of his having been occaſionally betraid into the perſonal acquaintance of ſome men of the firſt rank in the kingdom. This had made me, at firſt, wonder how, with his abilities to ſerve, inſtruct, and delight, they could be ſo little their own friends, as not to do themſelves the honor of ſeeking to be eſſentially and permanently his. But my ſurpriſe ſoon ceaſed, on the very obvious reflexion, that ſuch a character of real greatneſs as his, could never agree with their littleneſs. Even thoſe very talents, to the reputation of which he might owe their vain barren curioſity for ſeeing him once, would be againſt

their

their deſire of ſeeing him twice. In his company they would feel, or imagine they felt, a ſort of neceſſity for what on all things on earth they hold moſt in horror, thinking. Now thinking is to them a ſtate ſo violent, that they are on tenters till they get out of it; and in the mean while wiſh the cauſe of this torture to them at the devil. Pining out of their natural element of inſipid futility, and unmeaning merriment, they are miſerable till they rejoin their bleſſed compeers in tame, faint, ignoble mediocrity, or, lower yet, in abſolute worthleſſneſs. The "worſhipful ſociety" of triflers is the true fool's paradiſe.

However, I was not to enjoy long the pleaſure of ſo valuable an acquaintance as Mr. Sumners. It was but a very few days before Clara arrived, that he was taken ſuddenly ſo ill, of the conſequence of his wounds, that he had barely time

to make his laſt diſpoſition, which was chiefly that of leaving in my hands a packet ſealed up, of family-papers, which he deſired might be ſafely conveyed to Mr. Stanley's hands, who would take care to deliver them to his ſon, whom he mentioned with the moſt pathetic tenderneſs and regret; ſaying, that his abſence, juſt at that juncture, was even a conſolation to him, as he was ſenſible of the pain which the ſight of him in that condition would give him, and which it was ſo much better ſhould be ſpared him. His death, he obſerved, could not, to his ſon, in the eye of his reaſon, be any cauſe of ſurpriſe, or of ſorrow, conſidering that it was a relief from a life ſubject to ſuch conſtant tortures, but that his preſence at it might too much ſhock his excellent nature. He requeſted, that he might be buried in my pariſh-church, and ſoon after expired with the moſt pious fortitude, and the moſt placid reſignation.

I wrote

I wrote immediately advice of his death to Mr. Stanley, who, with great expreſſion of grief and eſteem, left the care of his funeral entirely to me, with a deſire that no coſt might be ſpared, to make it decent and worthy of the deceaſed, for which he ſent me an ample advance, excuſing his not coming down himſelf, on the abſence of his ſon, gone to Hamborough, on ſpecial affairs, which, however, would have been no obſtacle, but for ſome extraordinary call of buſineſs, that would not allow of his leaving town.

You will naturally now aſk, what is all this to Clara? Have patience, dear aunt, and you ſhall know, but not till the next poſt; for to tell you but the plain truth, I began this letter too late to ſave this, unleſs I break off, as I now actually do with the uſual aſſurances.

Yours, &c.

EDWARD MELLEFONT.

LETTER XXXIII.

Mr. EDWARD MELLEFONT *to Mrs.* BUCKLEY.

Lancaſhire.

[*In Continuation.*]

CLARA was, I may ſay, but juſt arrived, when one day, as we were ſitting after dinner in our fore-parlour, which looks to the door of the little ſpot of garden before the houſe, the noiſe of that door opening made us turn our eyes towards it, and behold! four men, with ſome others that followed out of curioſity, bringing in, on a hand-barrow, a man, in a blue ſurtout, without any hat, all bathed in his own blood, ſenſeleſs, and to all appearance rather dead than only dying.

Our

Our hall door being inſtantly opened, he was brought in, and laid on a couch, taken out of the parlor for that purpoſe. He ſeemed to be young; but there was no diſtinguiſhing any features of his face, it was, together with his hair, ſo covered with duſt, and blood that guſhed from two wounds in his head. He had alſo received a hurt in his right ſide, not, indeed, deep, but broad and jagged, ſo as to have more of the violent contuſion in it than of a wound, though it had produced a great effuſion of blood.

I diſpatched a man inſtantly for a ſurgeon, and in the mean while thoſe who had brought the ſtranger could give no other account than what they had from the poſt-boy, who had come with him from the laſt ſtage, and who was not yet returned from looking after the horſe that was the cauſe of this accident.

The

The perſon ſo hurt, was, it ſeems, riding poſt, and ſetting his horſe careleſsly, being probably ſo much abſorbed in other thoughts, that, not heeding any thing on the road before him, he was unprepared for the ſudden ſtart of his horſe, at a ſight of the carcaſe of a dead one which lay in the way; a ſtart aſide from it with ſuch a violence, that it flung him againſt the ragged ſtump of a tree hard by, ſtuck with ſome dry branches, ſo ſharp-pointed, that they ran into his head in two places, bruiſed his face and ſide, ſo as, upon the whole, to have greatly disfigured him, beſides ſtunning him to ſuch a degree, that he was taken up for dead.

This accident not being forty yards from where I live, which was the neareſt place of any likely to afford him aſſiſtence, if not too late, ſome who had joined to lift him from the ground, and to place him on a gardener's barrow for conveniency

veniency of carriage, judged very rightly that they could not do better than to bring him to my houſe.

Mr. Atkins, the ſurgeon, living but half a mile off, being luckily in the way, came immediately, though not before the ſtranger had given ſome ſigns of returning life and ſenſe. On his arrival, he viſited his hurts and wounds, and pronounced them more alarming in the appearance than dangerous in the reality; and that as to his trance, he apprehended he was only ſtunned with the violence of the blow, and hoped it would have no worſe conſequences, which were, indeed, ſometimes the caſe of contuſions of the head; but that, in all ſtates of the caſe, reſt and compoſure of body and mind were eſſentially requiſite.

In a very few minutes, the ſtranger was ſo far recovered, that he opened his eyes,

eyes, ſtared wildly about him, while raiſing his head from the bolſter of the couch, he leaned on his hand, and coming to his ſpeech, the firſt uſe he made of it was to thank us very politely for the aſſiſtance we were giving him: And the next was to aſk us how far he might be from Kettleby-farm? That queſtion inſtantly gave us all to know what the greateſt probability is that you have already anticipated, his being ſon to Mr. Sumners, whoſe reſidence had been preciſely at the place ſo called. On my telling him the ſmall diſtance, he ſeemed greatly pleaſed, and aſked me if Mr. Sumners was ſtill there, by which I found he was unapprized of his deceaſe. While I was heſitating my anſwer, the ſurgeon, who knew the father very well, and had attended him in his laſt illneſs, relieved, with more preſence of mind, my embaraſſment, by telling him, that his father was gone upon ſome indiſpenſable

ſable call, but believed he was very well, and much better than he had been years before; at which the poor young gentleman's eyes ſparkled with joy. Alas! how ſoon to be cruelly undeceived of the ſenſe in which he underſtood it, and of which the impoſition was purely meant in tenderneſs to his preſent condition, when the ſhock of the mournful truth might have been fatal, or at leaſt greatly hurtful to him.

Common humanity would have of itſelf alone induced us to take the utmoſt care of the greateſt ſtranger, in ſuch a circumſtance; but now the knowledge of him made ſtill a greater point of our concern for him. Clara, ſolely moved by a principle of compaſſion, exerted herſelf with all the officiouſneſs of a good heart, in aſſiſting my wife in her diſpoſitions for preparing an apartment, and every thing proper in his caſe; moved

moved eſpecially by the conſideration of the peculiarity of it: A young gentleman thus grievouſly hurt on his return to a father, whom he would find dead, and who, in all probability, muſt have left him in very indifferent circumſtances. All this only the more recommended him to her tender commiſeration, and drew tears of it from her ſoftneſs, even before ſhe could properly be ſaid to have ſeen him. For the blood from the wounds in his head, mixed with the duſt amidſt which he had fallen, had ſo disfigured his face, as not ſo much as to afford a gueſs at the features of it. But after it had been, by the ſurgeon's care and direction, cleanſed, and reſtored to its native honors, it is not eaſy to conceive the difference it made to his advantage. It is not poſſible to imagine a more noble, a more engaging countenance; while what paleneſs from effuſion

of

of blood took from its vividneſs of color, was made up to him in attractions of tenderneſs and compaſſion, by ſoftening ſomewhat of an air of command in the not unpleaſing ſternneſs of a brow, which in youth is a zeſt of manly beauty, that tempers its ſoftneſs, and defends it from effeminacy. In harmony with his face is the whole of his form, caſt in the moſt exquiſite model for ſhape, ſtature, and proportion. Then his port, manner, and air, have ſomething uncommonly great in them: he might have paſſed for one of the firſt nobility, in the times when thoſe of that claſs derived their air of diſtinction from elevation of ſentiment, and from a ſtern diſdain for any thing little or diſhonorable; before indolence, avarice, and meanneſs of ſpirit had, by an habitual impreſſion, given them a trivial ignoble countenance, only the more ridiculous, and the more remarkable, for that ſtrut

of

of inſolence, which they preſerve in the midſt of all their debaſement, and which they take for a fine air of ſtate and importance, though it is but a ſimptom the more of their beggarly want of true dignity. But leaving theſe pretious compeers in worthleſſneſs with my charitable wiſh for their waking, happily for themſelves, happily for their country, out of their portentouſly ſtupid dream of the poſſibility of forcing reſpect, by laying upon a barren ground of vanity the falſe and poorer yet manure of dirty gains by venality, let me proceed to do but juſtice to Mr. Sumners. It is eaſy to diſcern inſtantly in him a native greatneſs of ſpirit, ſet off with ſo amiable a grace of eaſe and ſweetneſs of temper, as, combined with his bloom of youth, and a figure formed to pleaſe, can hardly fail of prepoſſeſſing ſtrongly in his favor.

As ſoon then as the ſurgeon gave leave for a viſit to him in his room, my wife, ſiſter,

ſiſter and I went in to pay our reſpects, and to aſſure him that all imaginable care would be taken of him, with requeſt to him to tranquilliſe himſelf thoroughly, as one of the moſt effectual means for his ſpeedy recovery. But while Clara was acquitting herſelf of her compliment, the moſt indifferent by-ſtanders could hardly have eſcaped obſerving the impreſſion ſhe made on him, of ſurpriſe, mixed with ſomething more powerful, more tender than ſurpriſe. His gaze was as intenſe, as politeneſs would admit. He appeared confounded, motionleſs, and, after a length of pauſe, could hardly articulate, in breaks and confuſedly, an anſwer to her civility: It would be premature to ſay, that his appearance had on her an effect, in any degree like or approaching to that which hers had had on him. And yet, I thought I could diſcern in her looks, together with her ſurpriſe, a certain melancholic tenderneſs, ſuch as I had never

remarked

remarked in them before, and which, after all, might be nothing more than an expreſſion of a ſimpathiſing mood.

After this, as often as it could be, without prejudice to his recovery, or without being diſagreeable to himſelf, we gave him our company, to preſerve him from the natural wearineſs of ſolitude in a ſtrange houſe; and I cannot, conſiſtently with truth, ſay, that Clara betraid any averſion for contributing her ſhare in her aſſiſtence at this diſcharge of our duty of hoſpitality.

As ſoon, then, as he was enough recovered for converſation not to be prejudical to him, ſince the ſurgeon had ſo managed, as to make him eaſy about his ſtay with us, as more convenient than at his father's little apartment in Kettleby-farm, to which he had, at firſt, much inſiſted on being removed, but was grown more indifferent about that point; we

uſed

uſed our beſt endeavors to amuſe, and eſpecially to divert him from any impatience for the return of his father, till his health, grown more confirmed, would admit the ceſſation of this innocent fraud of concealing from him his death.

But in the mean while nothing did more real honor to his memory than the aſtoniſhing proficiency of his ſon, in all parts of learning, in all objects of the human inquiry. Yet no one could be leſs verboſe than he was, a ſuccinctneſs which was, ſtrictly ſpeaking, owing to his being a perfect maſter of every ſubject, on which we led him to ſpeak. In every ſcience, in every art, he had ſeized the preciſe point which threw the cleareſt light on the whole, and rendered it comprehenſible, at one view, in all its parts. On my expreſſing my aſtoniſhment at the progreſs in learning, he had made, in ſuch early youth: he at-

tributed it, to the fair repreſentation of ſtudy, by his father, under the form of pleaſure, without deceiving him as to its limitations of poſſible acquirement. Learning, he ſaid, was a hill, of which if you ſhould arrive at the ſummit, you can no more expect to touch the ſky than if you had ſtaid at the bottom: but then in the very act of aſcending, you have a great deal of pleaſure, and on your gaining the top you enjoy more delightful proſpects, and a ſerener air, when thus got above thoſe fogs of ignorance and prejudice, which involve thoſe whom you will have left beneath you in the valley.

Yet all his profuſion of knowledge was rather drawn from him by the courſe of a converſation, in which he always followed, and never led, than it came uncalled for, in any ſpirit of diſplay. Every-thing he ſaid, was ſo graced with winning

winning modeſty, with ſo unaſſuming, ſo diffident an air, as gave me the higheſt opinion of his underſtanding and character. But what the moſt amazed me was, his prodigious facility of tranſition from the moſt ſublime ſubjects, of which he treated with the greateſt command of thought, and language, to the mereſt arranteſt trifles, into which he entered with as much eaſe and propriety, as if trifles had been his element, and he had ſtudied nothing elſe all his life-time. By this means, he is the maſter of proportioning himſelf to every character, from the great Philoſopher who thinks the moſt profoundly, down to the little Lord, who never thought in his life; from the conſummate Scholar, and Stateſman, verſed in the abſtruſeſt points of literature, and of policy, to the gay Lady, whoſe ideas never roſe above the humble circle of ſuch objects, as rib-

bons, laces, pompoons, the miſteries of the toilet, points of dreſs, faſhions, routs, lap-dogs, or pretty fellows.

You will eaſily judge, however, that I anticipate here the diſcovery of his talents, which could not ſo unfold themſelves, till after he was more thoroughly acquainted, more recovered, more at eaſe in his mind.

In the mean while, Clara, I dare aver it, at firſt, from nothing but her natural goodneſs, and diſpoſition to pity, was, in doing the honors of the houſe, and of fulfilling the duty of hoſpitality, of great ſervice to her ſiſter, who, under favor of her aſſiſtance, and ſupplying her place, could have the more leiſure for her domeſtic affairs, and the care of her children.

In the purity of this view, ſhe occaſionally attended the ſick young gentleman,

man, and carried him in his broths, and ſuch articles of diet as the ſurgeon allowed him; which he was obſerved to receive from her hands with tranſports of alacrity and ſatisfaction. Nor was ſhe deficient in the good nature of yielding to the great deſire he expreſſed of her ſitting down, and whiling away the tedious moments of his chamber-confinement.

In a little time, however, we had ſome reaſon to think, that this frequentation, originally ſuggeſted by reſpects of civility, began, at length, to be granted to inclination. There appeared a moſt manifeſt revolution in Clara's temper and countenance. Her air was, from the openeſt, frankeſt gaiety, ſoftened into a tender melancholy, her looks wore all the marks of an inward conflict between a growing paſſion and her reaſon, over which ſhe probably dreaded the victory,

without having the power to form reſolutely a wiſh againſt it. It muſt, no doubt, have coſt her a violent ſtruggle, to reflect on her refuſal of ſome of the greateſt matches in Britain, and on the waywardneſs of her fate, that was now captivating her to ſimply a young gentleman, in far from paramount circumſtances, without any thing but his perſonal merit to recommend him, which is, indeed, a great conſideration, but ought not, perhaps, to be the only one.

We have all of us, however, reſpected enough her ſecret, which it is not impoſſible may be a ſecret even to herſelf, not to diſturb or diſconcert her with our ſuſpicions. Though I muſt own, I am not perfectly pleaſed at the courſe I imagine things are taking. Not that any intereſted motives ſway with me in the leaſt. If I mention Mr. Sumners's want of a competency, ſo obviouſly to be preſumed from

from the ſtreight circumſtances in which his father died, a good part of my concern is for himſelf; I do not think Clara's proviſion a ſufficient compenſation for the bar and heavy incumbrance to him of the nuptial ſtate, ſo young as he is; and at a time of life when ſetting out in queſt of adventurous atchievements of fortune, there is no being too light-armed. Yet let me not take up ſorrow at intereſt; all may ſtill be for the beſt; and of this, at leaſt, I am ſure, I mean and wiſh the beſt. I think match-making rather a dangerous office; but on ſome occaſions, not more ſo than match-breaking. Having, in fact, no controul over Clara, nor, indeed, deſiring any, beyond the influence of the moſt tender friendſhip, I remain the more eaſy, for my being perfectly ſatisfied of her honor and diſcretion. A paſſion may gain ſome empire over her, but never beyond a certain point. Her clear-

ſpirited ideas of a happineſs independent of ambition and fortune, may, perhaps, lead her to deſpiſe the falſe prejudices of the world, but will, I dare anſwer for her, never engage her to confound with them the juſt ones.

Mean while, her influence over Mr. Sumners has been of ſome ſervice to him. You will eaſily imagine, that ſo faſt as he recovered, we ſhould be the leſs able to continue the concealment from him of his father's death. We had, indeed, had the early precaution, on finding that the moment he could hold a pen, he wrote to Mr. Stanley, in London, to ſend away to him, by the ſame poſt, a letter, containing the account of his fall, and of our ſuppreſſion to him of his father's deceaſe. This had had the effect of bringing Mr. Stanley down in perſon, who had, however, the diſcretion not to go in to Mr. Sumners abruptly; nor

nor before he had conſulted with us on the beſt means of breaking to him, with the leaſt danger, the misfortune of his having loſt his father, which it was every inſtant growing more and more impracticable to keep from his knowledge; eſpecially, too, as he expreſſed ſome doubts of his well-being, from what he had heard on the road, of the indignity he had undergone of an arreſt, and was inclining to impute his abſence to that circumſtance, which he had been, till latterly, tender of mentioning.

Conſidering, then, his manifeſtly favorable diſtinction of Clara, it was propoſed to her, to take upon her the diſcloſure to him of that ſad event; but we could not prevail on her to accept the commiſſion; it went, ſhe ſaid, ſo much againſt her heart, to ſtrike ſuch a dagger to his, eſpecially in his preſent condition. For our diſpenſing her from

this diſagreeable taſk, ſhe gave other reaſons, ſo plauſible, (though, by the by, I do not think ſhe gave the true one at bottom) that we acquieſced in them.

Upon this Mr. Stanley engaged to hazard the diſcovery to Mr. Sumners; and being let in, they had a pretty long private conference; after which Mr. Stanley, almoſt immediately, ſet off on his return to town, where his preſence was neceſſary. At taking leave of me, he put into my hand a bank note, more than ſufficient to defray any incident charges, with many thanks, and a ſpecial, but very needleſs recommendation, of Mr. Sumners to our utmoſt care. He had offered to ſend down a ſurgeon from London, but Mr. Sumners, being perfectly ſatisfied of the ſkill and probity of Mr. Atkins, had rejected the propoſal.

No

No ſooner was Mr. Stanley gone, than there appeared in the young gentleman ſo viſible an alteration for the worſe, that we began to repent of not having waited ſtill longer to undeceive him. The news had actually cauſed ſuch a revolution in his mind, as had affected his body to ſuch a degree, that it produced, what had been before kept off, a feveriſh heat: and the wound of his breaſt, which was precedently in a very promiſing way, began to break out afreſh, not to mention other diſcouraging ſimptoms. His ſtomach eſpecially turned againſt all ſuſtenance, and there was great reaſon to fear that his grief and dejection would have very ſerious conſequences.

It was now that Clara's taſk was to commence, which, I aſſure you, ſhe made little or no difficulty of undertaking;

king, that of consolation, and of endeavoring to sooth and mitigate his affliction. But while she employed herself with all the zeal of sympathy, and not without efficacy, in this tender office of humanity, she was rather consulting the good of his health, than the safety of her own heart. The moving expression of his unaffected filial sorrows; an expression which was even more in his air and looks than in his words, added greatly to the amiableness of his person; so true it is, that the heart embellishes the exterior. Nothing, however, could so powerfully have affected Clara, considering her turn for sentimental tenderness, and sympathy for the afflicted.

I am, then, much mistaken, if, under the favor of this mood of softness, a yet more tender passion has not

not ſtoln unawares into her boſom, and taken poſſeſſion of it. At leaſt, I am pretty clear that ſhe has all the ſimptoms. For her conſolation, however, all appearances are falſe, or ſhe is in no great danger of the inclination being all on her ſide. It is not difficult to diſcern at the bottom of all the boundleſs reſpect and modeſty of this young gentleman, the profound impreſſion it is, indeed, no great wonder Clara ſhould have made on him; if you combine with the common effects of her beauty on all who ſee her, the additional charms of tenderneſs in her offices of compaſſion, and, I may venture to ſay, in the diſpoſitions of her heart ſo new, ſo ſtrange to her, and which are ſo far from miſbecoming her.

Such,

Such, dear aunt, is the preſent poſition of things. Our Angelica has, I fancy, found her Medoro. Of this event I have, however, judged it my duty to apprize you, eſpecially as you expreſſed ſuch a concern for Clara, and for every thing that relates to her.

Yours, &c.

EDWARD MELLEFONT.

LETTER XXXIV.

Miſs CLARA MAYNWARING *to Mrs.* BUCKLEY.

Dear Madam, *Lancaſhire.*

THAT cruel! that unjuſt brother of mine! But hold! do not let me abuſe him too much; for there is, I am afraid, ſomewhat of truth in what he has written to you, and communicated to me; but, I hope, matters are not quite ſo deſperate with me, as he makes them.

Reſpecting as I do the inviolable laws of candor, and the rights your friendſhip has to the cleareſt truth from me, I will not, nay, I need not diſſemble, what

what I am not conſcious of its being a guilt, that I give to Mr. Sumners highly the preference over every one of his ſex I have ſeen. I go farther. I do not deny that this preference is attended with a wiſh to pleaſe him, which in my life I never experienced for any one before him; and if, as I violently ſuſpect it, there lurks, under that wiſh, any thing of that dreadful paſſion called Love, which I tremble to pronounce or write, ſo horridly have I been terrified both at the word and the thought, (Modeſty, by your leave!) I will not offer to ſo much reaſon, to ſo much honor, as introduced it, the indignity of denying it, as if I could think ſenſibility to merit matter of reproach: Of this I am very ſure, that every ſentiment of my heart, might, on this occaſion, ſtand the ſcrutiny of the ſevereſt virtue. And yet, to judge of the power of that paſſion, by what I feel of the little I know

of

of it myſelf, I accede, from my whole heart and ſoul, to the opinion of its being a dangerous one. I do not wonder that parents are ſo much afraid of it for their children, conſidering that often the happineſs of their whole lives is at ſtake, on their making, or not making, a proper choice. Unfortunately, they are both liable to error, from very different cauſes. The old are generally governed in their choice for the young, by the thing on earth that has the leaſt to do with love; intereſt: while the young are too often miſled by their own unſuſpecting truth and inexperience, into a reliance on the falſeſt pretences, under the ſeducing maſk of that paſſion. Unhappy ſex that we are, ſo commonly doomed to the fatal alternative of being ſacrificed or betraid!

Do not, then, dear Madam, do me the injuſtice to think, that, putting the conſequences

ſequences at the *worſt* (I was really going to write, the *beſt*) of what my brother apprehends for me, I ſhall not have taken my reſolution, without ſuch a deliberation, as may do honor to my choice, and defend it as much as poſſible, from any air of weakneſs. Peace be to thoſe romance-writers, and noveliſts, who are for ever painting love under the character of madneſs, and calculate its ſtrength by its triumphs over reaſon! In general, I fancy, they may be right enough! But I hope that exceptions are not out of nature. I ſhould rather imagine, that a love founded on the great principles of honor, reaſon, and virtue, muſt burn with a ten times brighter fierceneſs, than a love obſcured or debaſed by the admixture of mean paſſions, or unworthy motives. In the conſciouſneſs, however, of my own weakneſs, I dare not be ſure that I ſhould, if I was unhappily in the caſe of it, renounce a paſſion for its not being

being authoriſed by reaſon, though I ſhould certainly try; but of this I may be very clear, that inclination can at leaſt not be the weaker for its having reaſon on its ſide; nor can I think otherwiſe, but that love is never ſo ſtrong, ſo invincible, as when it is a virtue.

Upon a ſubject ſo delicate, and ſo new to me as this, a ſubject that mocks definition, and can, as I conceive it, be only reached by ſentiment, I know too well your candor not to rely on it for your excuſing my not ſaying more. I recommend myſelf, then, to your beſt conſtruction, the hope of which is among the ſtrongeſt incentives to the regulation of my conduct on my deſire of deſerving it.

Yours, &c.

CLARA MAYNWARING.

LETTER XXXV.

Mrs. BUCKLEY *to Miſs* CLARA MAYNWARING.

My dear and ever eſteemed child,

IT is not eaſy for me to expreſs the pleaſure I received from Mr. Melleſont's two laſt letters, with your epilogue to them.

I never thought ſo ill of Clara as to doubt of her ſuſceptibility of love. Nature, who has made her ſo amiable, would hardly, after ſhe had turned out of her hands ſo finiſhed a piece of work, uſe herſelf ſo ill, as to break off her communication with it; ſhe would hardly beſtow, all in vain, ſo many bleſſings as ſhe has done upon you, under the curſe, which,

which, as St. Catharine of Sienna ſo ſhrewdly and ſo juſtly obſerved, characteriſes the Devil, an incapacity of loving.

Nothing, too, was more likely, than that a paſſion, ſo often rebuffed in its attempt to gain admittance to your breaſt, under the paſſports of ambition and fortune, ſhould, at length, ſurprize an entrance under the cover of a virtue, eſpecially ſo lovely an one as that of pity.

Then, Mr. Mellefont's deſcription of Mr. Sumners gives me ſo great an idea of him, that if I was not ſo near threeſcore, as, in honor to truth, I am obliged to confeſs myſelf, I verily think I could order a poſt-chaiſe to my door, and ſet out for my Nephew's in a hurry, to diſpute him with you.

But, jeſting a part, which by the by would not be very good-natured on a ſubject

ſubject ſo ſerious to you, it is your choice of him, that fixes my belief of his not being without a very extraordinary merit, ſince he could make an impreſſion on a heart ſo ſolid, ſo guarded as yours: it is not, in truth, from your having rejected ſo many ſplendid offers that I draw this concluſion; I have known more than one woman, who, after having refuſed very advantageous matches, have miſerably thrown themſelves away, on ſome deſpicable object of their fickly fancy, or wretched caprice. But I do you more juſtice; I as little ſuſpect you of folly as of vice. Some of our ſex, unhappily, and very conſiſtently, conjoin both; you are infinitely above either.

In this caſe, it is the nature of the choice that for ever juſtifies or condemns; in which are neceſſarily implied, the inviolably ſacred reſpects of duty to parents, and of the laws of honor, under which

which a due degree of conſideration of circumſtances is undoubtedly included, as who would wiſh to be the cauſe of detriment or miſery to the object of one's affection? But in this laſt clauſe, I only mean a juſt attention to the requiſites of a competency for happineſs, without taking into the account thoſe ſuperfluities, which oftner exclude than procure it.

With theſe reſerves, which are ſo far from incompatible with a true affection that they are eſſential to it, for I do not ſuppoſe any one will give to a girl's running away with her father's coachman, or to a vitious old fellow's marrying his maid, the honorable name of love; with theſe reſerves, I ſay, of duty and of honor, that paſſion has all the character of innocence, and is even under the ſpecial protection of virtue. Not death itſelf is hardly a tribute more certainly

paid

paid by old age to nature, than love by youth. The ſpring might as well be without its verdure, as that ſeaſon without its ſuſceptibility of that paſſion: nor think, my Clara, there is in this any ludicrous looſeneſs of caſuiſtry. The horror and ſhame are to thoſe who dare deny the bindingneſs of that law, of all the laws of nature the moſt ſacred and the moſt innocent, the law of moral love. The abuſe of that inſtinct is, doubtleſs, indefenſibly bad, but perhaps not eſſentially worſe than the infernal practice of exacting, under a moſt blaſphemouſly falſe color of religion, a ſolemn vow of diſobedience to one of Heaven's commands the moſt explicitly ſignified by revelation and nature.

As I have, then, but the more eſteemed you for your virtuous and honorable refuſal of offers from ſuch as either had not been able to inſpire you with

with a liking ſufficient to juſtify your yielding, or were forbidden to you by an invincible bar of juſtice or honor, I ſhall not, I aſſure you, eſteem you the leſs, for not holding out, where there exiſt no ſuch objections, as are founded on thoſe laudable principles, which made your reſiſtence a virtue.

There is even in the choice to which you now ſeem inclined, manifeſtly clear as it is of views of intereſt or ambition, ſomething noble, magnanimous, worthy, in ſhort, of Clara: and as you have a moral aſſurance of Mr. Sumners's character, there is no great hazard of your diſtinction of him being loſt upon him, or of his not being ſenſible of its value. On this occaſion your greateſt honor appears to me, what, however, is no wonder, in perfect harmony with your greateſt happineſs.

In all this, my worthy girl, I am the freer of my ſentiments in favor of your inclination, not only becauſe I think it a virtuous one, but as I am ſenſible your modeſty needs, perhaps, this friendly encouragement.

As to the news of the town, as you, doubtleſs, ſee the public papers, the marriage mentioned in them of one of your acquaintance, and nothing more than your acquaintance, will hardly have eſcaped your notice; Miſs Bloomſworth to Billy Grinly, that egregious feather-headed fop, whoſe rage for rendering by all the powers of dreſs, that horrid figure of his ſomewhat more tolerable, would have been ſo much in vain to any but ſuch an ideot as herſelf. You muſt have ſeen him, I fancy; nay, if I remember right, he was one of your danglers, till you drove him from you, as you would any other noiſom inſect, that peſtered you with

with his buz. She caught, it ſeems, the little animal at Court, one drawing-room night, or rather it caught her with a taudry taſteleſs birth-day-ſuit, in which he was fluttering about like the king of the butterflies.

She had been, for ſome time before, courted by Mr. Plowdon, of rather a ſuperior fortune to his, and who had nothing againſt him, but a certain roughneſs, and unpoliteneſs of character, which concealed much ſolid ſenſe and worth. This too was owing to a neglect of his education by his father, one of the moſt determinate fox-hunters that ever nobly riſked his neck over a five-bar-gate; a neck which however was, at length, broke, in too ardent a purſuit of the glories of the chace. Theſe two ſuitors Miſs Bloomſworth weighed in ſcales, of which not ſolid judgment, but fickly Fancy held the ballance, and accordingly

the lighteſt in the eye of taſte proved the heavieſt with the Fair one, and Plowdon had the good fortune to kick the beam. Grinly was the elect of a heart only made for trifles. She had not the ſenſe to conſider that in ſuch a flimſy coxcomb, there was not the ſtuff ever to make a man; whereas, in the ruſtic, there was a ſolidity of ſubſtance, that wanted only the poliſh which it was very capable of receiving. Out of a block of marble, in the greateſt roughneſs of its firſt chippings, there may be formed the nobleſt ſtatue; but what the deuce can you make better of a human-figured ſtick out of a toy-ſhop than a frippery rag-doll? Beſides, to love a clown may be but a treſpaſs againſt opinion, but to love a fop, is a ſin againſt nature.

Well, but there has been another marriage which you could not ſee in the papers, becauſe, for certain reaſons of decency

decency and family-regard, which will be obvious to you, it was expreſsly kept out of them, and the ceremony but three nights ago performed with the utmoſt privacy, in the preſence of a very few ſelect perſons. "Ay, but what marriage?" I wonder at your aſſurance in aſking me ſuch a queſtion; as if you had not yourſelf been preſent at the nuptials of Lord Soberton and Lady Harriet. Nay, do not ſtare. "What, I Clara "Maynwaring, at that time in Lanca-"ſhire at two hundred miles diſtance, "I aſſiſt at a wedding in London? in-"deed Mrs. Buckley, I am ſorry for "you, but you really doat."—Abuſe me as much as you pleaſe, but I do aver, and will maintain it, that you, yes, once more you, was at that ſame wedding; I do not ſay, mark me, quite, in your own proper perſon, but, virtually, through me, the ſelf conſtituted proxy for you on that occaſion, at the

earneſt requeſt of the two parties. So that the old, fat, ugly, Mrs. Buckley, had the honor of repreſenting the young, blooming, beautiful Clara, of which, I aſſure you, I was not a little proud, nor a little welcome there; as I am perfectly ſatisfied that the news will be to you.

But I have here anticipated ſome material events. As ſoon as Lord Soberton had finiſhed the ultimate arrangements for the nuptial ceremony, he came to my houſe, and with the moſt cordial expreſſions of friendſhip and eſteem acquainted me of every thing being fixed, and entreated, in Lady Harriet's name and yours, my preſence at it, in acquittal of your promiſe of being one of her bridemaids.

But what ſovereignly pleaſed me, was, his telling me, that he had diſdained to impoſe

impoſe himſelf on Lady Harriet, under the ſlur, though but of a conſciouſneſs to himſelf, of a ſecret offence. The way he took to break it to her was not amiſs, conſidering the fairneſs of the ſtep. He threw himſelf at her feet, and ſeriouſly declared to her, that he would not quit that poſture, till ſhe ſhould ſincerely, and from her heart, pronounce his pardon for a fault he was going to confeſs to her. You may gueſs the anſwer of a woman, who, you are ſenſible, adores him; and, perhaps, the rogue knew it too. However, after ſecuring his terms of an abſolute unreſerved remiſſion, he, with all the proper ſoftenings, confeſſed his wrong to her, and did full juſtice to your noble procedure on it, which ſolved, ſo much to your honor, the miſtery of your ſudden diſappearance.

The manner in which ſhe took this diſcovery, for it certainly was one to her,

my Lord told me, had raiſed her infinitely in his opinion. Without betraying any emotions of anger, or vulgar jealouſy, ſhe gave him ſo much credit for the frankneſs and generoſity of his confeſſion, that ſhe did not ſuffer him to endure a moment's pain of uncertainty about her ſentiments. Not content with immediately granting her forgiveneſs, as ample as he could deſire it, ſhe, without meanneſs, or weakneſs, ſet herſelf to ſooth his confuſion, and even to ſuggeſt excuſes for his failure, which ſhe principally took from her allowance of your tranſcendent merit. She ſaw, in ſhort, too much, and too juſtly in this his acknowledgment of an error, the ſincerity of his regret, and the ſolidity of his return, not to let the ſenſe of her wrong, be abſorbed in the joy of his readineſs to repair it.

As for you, ſhe wanted words to expreſs her ſenſe of your worthineſs. You had

had not ſo much ſurpriſed her, as you overwhelmed her with the dignity of your conduct.

I dare ſwear ſhe built altars to you in her heart. In her eſtimate it required a ſuperhuman power to withſtand the offer of a Lord Soberton, that god of her idolatry. And, to do him but juſtice, he is a prodigy of worth, an illuſtrious exception indeed to the deſpicable generality of his fellow-nobles.

It was, then, with a tranſport of the moſt grateful delight, that ſhe hailed his propoſal of a nuptial preſent to you of her jewels, to which, however, ſhe would not conſent, without adding to them a thouſand pounds in a bank-note, which, together with a deed of gift in her name, of an eſtate and manſion-houſe in Surrey, of about two hundred and forty pounds a year, will inſtantly be forwarded to you in a box, by a ſafe meſſenger. As to the

eſtate, it is originally a donation from Lord Soberton to Lady Harriet, in order to her conveyance of it to you, as being preſumably more ſatisfactory to your delicacy.

There is more yet: Lord Soberton beſtows on my nephew the living of Welborough, which is a good ſeven hundred a-year, not to mention his aſſurances of future patronage, of which I dare guarantee the ſincerity. But all this will be better explained to you in their joint-letter, which goes in the box, and which is conceived in terms ſo reſpectful, that the manner ſurpaſſes the benefit.

And now, good folks, (I addreſs myſelf to you now in family,) I have undertaken for you, that you ſhall not refuſe the munificence offered you, on the foot of the moſt honorable regard and eſteem. This would not only be falſe heroics, but

but high treaſon againſt friendſhip; for of this I am ſure, your non-acceptance would make Lady Harriet very unhappy: and as for me, beſides that I ſhould be piqued at your not doing honor to my engagement for you, I would go and ſwear to whoever would hear me, that Clara eſpecially refuſed them, in dudgeon, becauſe you and ſhe were ſorry, upon ſecond thoughts, for her letting Lord Soberton ſlip through her fingers. So, pray, let me have at leaſt no vain ſcruples; for as to juſt ones, you will find me very ready to admit them.

But, dear Clara, (I now write ſingly to you,) the Lovell-family has ſtill another obligation to you, and a very eſſential one, that of the real and thorough reformation of Earl Lovell. There never was ſo complete a change of conduct, which he himſelf frankly attributes to your being the cauſe of his opening his

eyes on his folly and worthleſſneſs of character. But no entreaties of Lady Lovell could prevail on him to break the reſolution which he took, on your refuſal of him, to go abroad, and ſeek, in travels, a diſſipation of his diſcontent, at his not having ſucceeded with you. He propoſes, too, to go exactly the ſame tour of Europe, which he took when he made it in pure complaiſance to faſhion, and gives for his reaſon, that he is ſure every thing will appear, to his eyes of obſervation, as new as if he had never ſeen them with thoſe unmeaning ones, with which he went abroad the firſt time; and carried, like the ſnail, too much of home on his back, to make any progreſs in the knowledge of men and things. His mother and Lady Harriet are both ſorry for his being loſt to them, juſt as you had reſtored him both to them and to himſelf; but eſpecially Lady Lovell repents, from her whole ſoul, her having

oppoſed,

oppoſed, what ſhe would now ardently wiſh, his happineſs with you, on a ſuppoſition, that you might perhaps yet be brought over. Lord Lovell, however, is himſelf more juſtly perſuaded of the impoſſibility, which confirms him in his determination to leave the kingdom for a while. He ſets out next week, having only ſtaid ſo long to aſſiſt at his ſiſter's nuptials.

And now, Clara, ſuffer me to offer you my fervent wiſhes, of what, however, I make not the leaſt doubt, that the choice of your heart may make you ample amends for your noble contempt of title and fortune, ſo often at your feet, and which you have ſo virtuouſly rejected, for their not being preſented to you by the hands of Love and Honor. But even independently of that event, what joy could title or fortune give you, equal to what you muſt at this moment derive,

from

from your reflexion on your having adhered unalterably to your principles! This is a real heaven you will have formed in your own boſom; and how ſuperior that permanent internal one to the tranſitory fools-paradiſe of ſtupid greatneſs and infamous opulence! There is not, ſurely, a general axiom more ſacredly true, than that we are eſſentially happier by virtuous ſacrifices, than by weak indulgences.

Adieu, yours, &c.

LUCY BUCKLEY.

LETTER XXXVI.

Mr. LEONARD SUMNERS *to Mr.* CHARLES STANLEY, *Merchant, at Hamborough.*

IT is, my dear friend, to you that, your father only excepted, I write the firſt, on my recovery of the ability to hold a pen, after the misfortune of which he will before now have acquainted you.

You cannot conceive what a diſappointment it is to me, for many reaſons, not to find you returned to England, from your Hamborough expedition. In my preſent ſituation you would have been of great conſolation and ſervice to me.

I do

I do not, however, forget you, and as yet not releaſed from the confinement to which thoſe hurts have condemned me, that I received from an accident rather burleſc than tragical, I ſeize what leaſure is afforded me from that circumſtance to acquit myſelf of my promiſe to you of the account of my ſucceſs, whatever it ſhould be, in the proſpect on which I went to Holland, ſore, indeed, againſt my will, as I was loth to leave a father, whom, as it has happened, I was never to ſee again; a father whom I ſupremely and deſervedly loved and reverenced; a father languiſhing under pains and infirmities, and whom nothing leſs than his expreſs command, could have obliged me to leave.

His reaſons were nevertheleſs very cogent ones. You are ſenſible of the ſtreightneſs of his circumſtances, and of the paſſion he had for their taking a better

better turn, upon my account, more than upon his own. This led him to embrace for me the overture of Mr. Arnold, my grand-uncle by my mother's ſide, to whom I was naturally heir at law, being next in blood, and who, in a decrepid age, being eighty-ſix years old, had ſent expreſsly for me to Amſterdam, where he had reſided, in quality of Clerk and Merchant, from his tendereſt infancy. But as his perſonal hiſtory is not foreign to my purpoſe, I give it you ſummarily here.

Born and bred till the age of fifteen in London, he had been by his father, who was not able to give him any fortune, placed, for his education, in the commercial way, in the compting-houſe at Amſterdam of Minheer Vanſlieben, his correſpondent, and a Merchant of ſome repute in that city, though originally only an orphan, without friends, brought

brought up at the *Wees-houſe*, and who, at length, by his induſtry, had made his way in the world. With him, in the quality of Clerk, my uncle had lived ſeveral years, upon the hardeſt terms, and with barely an allowance of neceſſaries of life, which had inured him to a habit of penury he was never afterwards able to ſhake off, though it had long ceaſed to be a neceſſity. For his maſter, all on a ſudden, and without obſerving any intermediate degree, deſcended from the height of the moſt diſtant reſerve to the level of the moſt friendly familiarity.

I have been told that this is not uncommon to the Merchants of this city, who exact, indeed, from their Clerks a long and ſtrict probation, but when that is ſatisfactorily got over, they immediately take them to their tables, raiſe their ſtipends at once from two hundred to

two

two or three thouſand florins a year, and often abandon to them the whole management of their concerns.

But Minheer Vanſlieben had collaterally another motive. He had but one child, a natural daughter by a young woman of a reputable Burgher's family, who had been in a great meaſure, the cauſe of her fault, by their not conſenting to her marrying him, and who, on the diſcovery of her pregnancy, treated her ſo ill that ſhe died of their perſecution, immediately after her delivery. Vanſlieben naturally took care of the child; and was ſo faithful to the memory of the deceaſed, that he never would marry again.

On his daughter's being grown up, he pitched on this my grand-uncle, for her huſband, having before ſatisfied himſelf of their mutual liking, and took him

him into partnerſhip, which continued till Vanſlieben's death, ſome years after.

Mrs. Arnold had brought with her not only a competent fortune and the ſhare of a good buſineſs, but a diſpoſition to carry economy much beyond thoſe bounds where it ceaſes to be a virtue; in which ſhe proved but too congenial to her huſband, who was himſelf not a little touched with that miſerable vice.

They had two ſons, who both of them died young and iſſueleſs, the one, of the ſmall-pox, in his father's houſe, the other at Batavia, where he had been very unneceſſarily ſent, on the pretext of making a fortune, while the real motive was the ſaving to them the expences of his maintenance. Nor do I find that they much regretted their children, avarice giving a ſort of hardneſs of heart that makes it inſenſible to the feelings of Nature.

Mrs.

Mrs. Arnold ſurvived them many years, and died ſomething more than a twelvemonth ago, in a good old age, at which I do not much wonder, having obſerved, that from that very frugality, which is even a virtue when not owing to ſo great an evil as covetouſneſs, there ariſes, however, one good, the preſervation of health, if the prolongation of ſuch miſerable lives can properly be called a good. Mr. Arnold thus widowed, and left without a ſingle relation, in Holland, for whom he could have any the leaſt regard, and being, by many infallible ſimptoms, admoniſhed of his own approaching end, turned, at length, his thoughts towards his own family in England, which he had for above half a century ſo totally neglected, that it coſt him ſome pains of inquiry to diſcover his next heir in blood, to whom he was determined to leave his fortune and poſſeſſions, probably not ſo much

from

from any motive of tenderneſs, as merely from an impulſe of the cuſtom of prefering a relation to a ſtranger.

Having committed, then, this enquiry to Mr. Von-Hock, his correſpondent in London, with proper indications, I was, after ſome reſearch, diſcovered to be the perſon entitled; upon which Mr. Arnold ſignified his deſire that I ſhould go over to him, for ſome very ſpecious reaſons which he gave. Hereon, my father, who had hardly ever heard of this Arnold, ſo complete had his detachedneſs been from his family, and who had not conceived any great idea of the invitation, judged, however, that I ſhould be wanting to myſelf, if I did not make a trip to ſee what there might be gained, and nothing could be loſt but a little time, and ſome expence ſcarce worth mentioning, by this ſtep of complaiſance. He laid, then, his injunction on me to go,

go, and I accordingly took, alas! my laſt farewell of him.

As ſoon as I was arrived at Amſterdam, equipped with the moſt authentic teſtimonials of my identity of perſon, together with a letter of introduction from Mr. Van-Hock, I repaired directly to my uncle's houſe, which was far from a conſpicuous one, though very commodiouſly ſituated near the Stadt-houſe. I was, on mentioning my name, received with as much civility as could be well expected from an honeſt old Swiſs, who, having lived long in Holland, was, as our Cambridge-friend would ſay, hardened like a quill, by being Dutched, and who had probably never ſaid a thing before in his life that was not dry or harſh. This man, who with his wife, as much ſtricken in years as himſelf, compoſed the whole domeſtic attendance of my uncle, who, he told me, was very ill, but

but he would go inſtantly and acquaint him of my arrival.

In the mean while, I could not help taking notice of the furniture of the hall, or outer room, conſiſting of four broken-back chairs, and a table that appeared rickety with age, and of which one leaf, off the hinges, hung on the ground. Who does not know the mechanical force of appearance? My heart was chilled within me, at the ſight of ſo cold and comfortleſs a proſpect.

I was, however, after ſome little waiting, introduced to my uncle, in an inner apartment, very little better furniſhed, where he was ſitting up in his bed, with the letters and papers I had brought him, on which he had juſt caſt an eye. He appeared to me a venerable old man, but ſo much broken, ſo far gone in a decay of nature, that the firſt idea he excited in me was that of compaſſion.

I can-

I cannot ſay that he gave any great ſigns of emotion at the ſight of me: on the contrary, I thought I remarked in him rather an inſenſibility, which finiſhed the diſheartening me. I was wrong. There was a double reaſon for it; firſt, the natural indifference of old age to every thing, eſpecially under a mortal infirmity; and then his having contracted, by his long reſidence in Holland, a habit of the Dutch phlegm, which does not abound in outward demonſtration, and yet, often, is not deficient in inward feelings. This was preciſely the caſe of my uncle towards me. For after ſome inquiries into the ſtate of our family, and thanking me, in his dry way, for the pleaſure I was giving him, in letting him ſee me before he died, he ordered the proper public officers immediately to be ſent for, and a will, he had ready prepared, with blanks for the purpoſe by him, was filled up, in the moſt valid and authen-

tic form, with my name and proper designations, as his sole heir, and executor, with not a single legacy besides, except of an annuity of four-hundred florins, to the old Swiss and his wife, for their lives.

It was high time he should take this step, if ever he was to take it; for though after it he appeared rather on the mending hand, he did not survive it quite a week, during which, considering the nature of the disposition he had made in my favor, it is unconceivable with how cold a reserve, how superficial a regard, he received my dutiful attendance and service. Sometimes, indeed, his eyes, already dim with the shades of death, he would fix on me, with a faint expression in them of pleasure and approbation; but then he would instantly take them off again, with a sigh, and air of regret. Very probably, it was less in the

the light of his neareſt relation that he looked on me, than in that of an heir, longing for his laſt moments to rob him of poſſeſſions, which nothing but his inability of carrying them with him, could have engaged him to leave to any one. If that was his idea of me, he wronged me greatly; but he furniſhed in it one of the ſtrongeſt arguments againſt that money-mad avarice which leads its wretched votaries to accumulate wealth againſt that moment in which they are to ceaſe for ever to want it, and in which it muſt paſs to heirs, whom they muſt naturally hate, on the not improbable preſumption of that joy at their death, for which their life will have ſo ſenſeleſsly been employed to collect cauſe and matter; a life, the whole ſad dirty ground-work of which will have been the thinking how to gain or ſave a ſixpence.

I am ſenſible, indeed, that ſome have made of their innocent children an excuſe for their ſordid penury. One wretch of this kind I knew, who, againſt every call of generoſity, or charity, uſed for ever to plead his being accountable to his dear children for every ſhilling he ſpent. He was, in fact, very rich: but as to thoſe ſame dear children of his, and he had two, he would, for half-a-crown, have put them both into a pie, and for another half-a-crown eaten the pie, and hugged himſelf on being hired to ſave by it the expence of a meal. The truth was, that he ſtarved to death one of them, and by ill uſage broke the other's heart.

But abſtracted from the laudable ſatisfaction of a parent's leaving to his children in a moderate proviſion, rather a ſpur to their virtuous induſtry, than, in an overgrown fortune, a cauſe of idleneſs,

neſs, of worthleſſneſs, and often of ruin, I cannot conceive what difference it can make to a man, whether he dies poſſeſſed of fifty millions or of not five ſhillings, unleſs to his greater regret in the firſt caſe.

I had, however, at firſt, been ſo much influenced by appearances at Mr. Arnold's, that I had written to my father, not to entertain over-high ideas of my expectancies; which I had room to believe were much leſs conſiderable than we had been made to believe.

Being now, by my uncle's direction, in quiet poſſeſſion of every thing but his private cloſet and papers, I appeared, and indeed was, maſter of the houſe, in which he gave himſelf no longer any concern, leaving every thing to my diſpoſition, in which, I dare aſſure you, I behaved with all the modeſty and cir-

cumſpection imaginable. He had, as his voice grew, like his perceptions, fainter and fainter, faulteringly acquainted me, that the keys of his cloſet, and bureau, were under his bed's-head, which he deſired me to take as ſoon as the breath ſhould be out of his body. But, what you will think ſingular enough, when that happened, which was about ten in the morning, he was found to have expired, with his keys faſt graſped in his right hand. The Swiſs, who had faithfully attended him, and who knew him better than I, told me, he fancied it was in order to deliver them to me. May be ſo. I ſhould otherwiſe have currently imputed it to his tenaciouſneſs of a ſecret which theſe keys are now to diſcover, and of which I am very clear the honeſt Swiſs himſelf was ignorant: ſince even to me, his deſigned heir, whom it ſo much concerned, he had not opened his lips about it.

The

The firſt leaſure moment, then, after his death, and after giving the neceſſary direction for his funeral obſequies, in the manner which he himſelf had poſitively dictated, I went to the cloſet, unlocked the door of it, and the firſt thing that ſtruck my eyes, was a pretty thick folio-book, laid on a kind of writing table, and which haſtening to open, I found was a ſchedule or inventary of his whole fortune, written in the moſt legible hand, and in the cleareſt order.

. . . . . .

Mr. Arnold had always paſſed for rich; but that being a vague general term, gives no poſitive idea of the ſpecific degree of opulence which conſtitutes that title. Now, though, conſidering the nature and greatneſs of his dealings, combined with his ſpirit of parſimony, it was humanly ſpeaking not poſſible for him to eſcape, as he had wiſhed to do, the being reputed rich, contrary to the

common run of miſers, who though they affect the outſide of poverty, are nevertheleſs pleaſed with the reputation of wealth, and eſpecially with the mean reſpect commonly paid to it. He had, however, by the moſt ſedulous endeavours, and with the moſt guarded attention to the gratification of his and his wife's peculiar humor of concealment, ſo far ſucceeded, that no one's conjectures or ſuſpicions had ever come near to the reality of that immenſe fortune, which he had amaſſed; and of which this book contained the cleareſt documents and indications. There were not only, in it, the reſpective references to his proofs of great property, in all the great Banks of Europe, ſuch as thoſe of London, Amſterdam, Venice, Genoa, the Steur of Saxony, &c. but to ſubſtantial ſecurities of mortages, of bills, of bonds from Public Companies, and of various other articles of that kind, and

and all of them moſt eaſily and moſt readily to be realiſed and converted into caſh. There were alſo the deeds of two large eſtates, which he had purchaſed in Glouceſter and Kent, in his own name, with only the more ſecrecy for his having affected none, unnoted by any but by ſuch parties as were immediately concerned, and which I found he had, ſince my arrival, and without mentioning a ſillable of it to myſelf, left to me by particular aſſignment, on a preſumption, perhaps, that the general deviſe in his will was not ſufficient. In ſhort, I found that nothing had been omitted by him, that could enlighten or ſecure me, in obtaining or keeping poſſeſſion of that great fortune, which he had bequeathed me; and ſo ſtrictly ſpeaking, great it was, that I was obliged to conſume near a week in barely going over the various articles, and aſcertaining their reſpective references: the whole amounting to

ſuch a ſum as I can hardly venture to ſpecify to you. It was not only beyond my imagination, but beyond any wiſhes that I could have dared to form.

Then his books, which were kept with admirable accuracy, and in which I could obſerve but two hands, his own, and that of Mrs. Arnold, clearly pointed out the ſources of this aſtoniſhing accumulation of wealth. It is true, there appeared on them ſundry branches of dealing, but the principal ſpring-head was abſolutely in our own Change-alley.

Mr. Arnold had, it ſeems, long made a profound ſtudy of the nature, eſſence, fluctuations, and cauſes of fluctuation of our ſtocks; by a conſtant ſeries of bold and ſhrewd ſpeculations, upon which he had improved an originally not inconſiderable capital into that ſtupendous

ſtupendous one of which I now found myſelf in poſſeſſion.

He had not only made occaſionally ſundry trips to London, but had kept, till two or three years before his death, ſpecial meſſengers and advice-boats, ſtationed for the ſpeedier conveyance to him of any intelligence that could affect his tranſactions in that way.

I found alſo afterwards, that, upon his plan of concealing the enormous ſwell of his fortune, he never made more bitter complaints of ill-luck, in that ſpecies of gaming, than when he had gained by it ſome conſiderable advantage.

But what was more ſingular yet, he moſt heartily deſpiſed this very branch of dealing, by which he was making theſe exorbitant profits. There was, however, in this nothing paradoxical. This very contempt gave him the greater

coolneſs both in his ſpeculations and reduction of them to practice. Though our Jonathan's and Garraway's were to him, in virtue of his correſpondences, the mines of Mexico and Peru, he treated, in confidential letters and converſation, the whole ſiſtem of them, with the utmoſt diſapprobation. Independently of the total needleſſneſs of contracting the public debt on which they were founded, he ſaw nothing in the reigning practice of ſtock-jobbing, but the calenture of the year 1720, which had made ſo many take the South-Sea for green-fields, and drown themſelves in it, ſince then converted into a continual ſlow fever, that would only the more certainly conſume and deſtroy the body politic: and, indeed, what better could be expected? The fair ſpirit of commerce, the meritorious courage of attempting new diſcoveries, had ſeen the ſtreams of wealth, that uſed to ſupply thoſe ſalutary channels,

channels, perniciouſly diverted and running into that ſpurious one, the navigation on which, in paper-veſſels, Mr. Arnold uſed, not quite unhumorouſly, to ſay, was, literally ſpeaking, in the way of a trade-wind, or rather itſelf a wind-trade; ſince a paltry, ridiculous, unauthentic puff in the news-paper could make fair or foul weather, riſe or fall the ſtocks. This he had often experienced; having ſometimes gained from one to two, or more thouſands of pounds by nonſenſe of this kind. And, in this courſe, his loſing was comparatively very rare, which was owing to his ſuperior knowledge and conſtant alertneſs at watching events, and gaining the earlieſt true intelligence, or at making the moſt of falſe. Conſidering, then, the advantages of a cool experienced gameſter, at ſo long a run, amidſt the paſſions of heated and unſkilful players, the wonder was intirely taken off to me of his having been

been able, in a term of near half a century's close application to that single object, to amass the fortune he did. The point of surprise lay in his having so effectually concealed it, to his endeavours at which he must have been little less than a slave.

The very disorders, however, and weak side of the stocks, which none knew better than he who had gotten so much by them, made him bethink himself in time of drawing out his great stake in them, and of realising the sums he had amassed in them.

Among other reasons, which he gave, in a letter to a friend, and which I will deduce to you more at large, when I have the pleasure of seeing you, he very sensibly observed, that the national debt could not go on augmenting *ad infinitum*; that it was more likely the fabric would first fall to the ground, by

by its foundations being overbuilt: that if that caſe was not already in exiſtence, it imminently threatened to be ſo. In the mean while, his availing himſelf of the current practice, did not hinder his making another not leſs judicious reflexion. On the trite but undeniable principle, that in all human affairs there is a certain line or meaſure beyond which there is no going with impunity, he averred it demonſtrable, though the caſe was certainly a rare one, and even at the firſt view bordered on the paradoxical, that an exceſs of real wealth might, for reaſons not difficult to give, be hurtful to a nation; and if ſo, how much more pernicious muſt be an overflow of fictitious wealth, ſuch as actually exiſts in the prodigious glut of our paper-mill coinage; not the leaſt of its miſchiefs being that of raiſing, on ſo crazy a bottom, the prices of all the neceſſaries of life, to the manifeſt injury of the commu-

community, and eſpecially of our commerce, foreign and domeſtic, the ſolid advantages of which have been ſo impolitically ſacrificed to an unwholſome bloated appearance of falſe opulence, from a nation's being mortgaged without neceſſity, and poſterity burthened without deſerving it, and all without one valuable end being gained for it, but much the contrary.

In the fear, then, of worſe, and with that ſpirit of caution ſo natural to the love of money, ever ſeeking its greateſt ſecurity, Mr. Arnold had latterly begun to take meaſures for that thread's not breaking in his hands, on which his fortune in the funds hung, and ſat about winding out of them, as ſnug and as unobſerved as he could poſſibly contrive to do. I heartily hope, however, that his apprehenſions were rather the produce of a timidity conſtitutional to himſelf,

ſelf, than of a rational miſtruſt; and that the edifice of the ſtocks may be like the leaning tower of Aſinelli near Bologna, which always appears to threaten a fall, without ever falling.

Upon the plan, then, of the ſolideſt realiſation, he, at length, converted the bulk of his fortune into various articles of the ſafeſt nature. Nor do I mention but as a very ſmall part ſome bulſes of diamonds and jewels, to a pretty large amount, which I found in the drawers of his bureau.

But there was one inconſiſtency which I confeſs ſtruck me a good deal, conſidering his unqueſtionable knowledge and ſenſe of the value of intereſt. Along the back part of the cloſet, there ſtood, on the floor, a range of thirteen cheſts, rather ſomewhat larger than the common ſize of the thouſand-pound-ones for ſilver bullion, or dollars for exportation.

tion. On opening the chefts, they were, according to the ſpecification in his books, full of the gold coins of various nations. But, I own, I could not conceive any ſatisfactory reaſon why he had thus ſuffered, at leaſt ſome of them, to lie dead for many years, the cords, with which they were tied, being rotten with age. The intereſt of them muſt, (), that preſumable time, have amounted to near if not quite double the ſum. However, there they were, and I immediately ſent them, for ſecurity, to be depoſited, for me, in the Bank of Amſterdam. This alone was clearly a princely fortune.

On finding, then, this glut of wealth ſo ſuddenly, ſo unexpectedly poured in upon me, how much was I not indebted to that philoſophical caſt of mind with which my father had inſpired me, and which hindered my head from being turned with it? My great point then

was,

was, to ſtand on my guard againſt that infatuating quality, for which opulence is ſo deſervedly infamous: Fortune being ſo fond of Folly, that where ſhe does not find men fools, ſhe makes them ſo. Of one thing, however, I am very ſure, that if I cannot ennoble my fortune by the uſe I hope to make of it, I ſhall ever ſpurn with diſdain the thought of my fortune's ennobling me. Nor can I conceive any thing ſo very deſpicable as a money-made Lord, except a Lord by deſcent degraded, or, more properly ſpeaking, unmade, by ſuch a ſordid attachment to lucre, as is abſolutely uncompatible with the ideas of honor, once annexed to that diſtinction; but now pretty well aboliſhed, ſince vanity is ſeen capable of erecting the very dirtieſt money-grubs into Peers, as avarice is of ſinking the moſt illuſtrious Peers into the arranteſt money-grubs.

As

As ſoon, however, as I was clearly ſatisfied of every thing, I wrote my father a ſuccinct account of my ſucceſs, and gave the letter to Mr. Haynes, a Gentleman, who was going over to England, and whom I overtook, about a month afterwards, at Helvoetſluys, when he had, by a very uncommon accident of a contrary wind of ſo long a duration, been detained above three weeks, as he was waiting there to go by the packet; ſo that my poor father died without the ſatisfaction of knowing my ſucceſſion to that fortune, which was ſo much endeared to me, by the proſpect of ſharing it with him, and of rendering the remainder of his life more eaſy, and more commodious.

During that month, I had ſo ſettled all affairs, and ſo ſecurely quieted my poſſeſſions, that I could with perfect tranquillity quit Amſterdam, to return

to

to my native country, where I was determined to be intirely governed by my father's advice, and not even to take a ſingle ſervant or domeſtic, or make any the leaſt ſhow, till I ſhould have his opinion and direction.

As to the honeſt old Swiſs and his wife, who had been long faithful ſervants to my uncle, I raiſed their annuity from four hundred to twelve hundred florins a-year; and, what will make you laugh, I could hardly prevail on them to accept it; not that they did not love money; not that they piqued themſelves on generoſity; but the augmentation appeared out of rule to them: in the hardneſs of their heads they had no conception but of the letter of the legacy, and almoſt dreaded ſome trap in the addition. However, they were ſoon convinced, thankful, and very well pleaſed.

But before I leave Holland, with which I conclude this letter, with refer-

ence

ence to the next poſt for continuation, allow me one ſummary ſtricture on the national character of the Dutch. By what I could ſee of them, in my very ſhort ſtay in their country, where I was too much ingroſſed by my private affairs, to make any valuable general obſervations, they appear to me to be, to the reſt of mankind, what the bees are to the animal kingdom, a ſolitary kind of beings, hived a-part, the free-booters of every plant or flower that offers them honey, always murmuring, inceſſantly intent on their work, ready with their ſtings for any diſturbers, induſtrious, but unſocial.

I am afraid, too, that their hive is liable to be pillaged by bad neighbours; but, as the old ſaw has it, "Let the Bees look to that."

I am, yours, &c.

LEONARD SUMNERS.

LETTER XXXVII.

Mr. LEONARD SUMNERS *to Mr.* CHARLES STANLEY, *Merchant at Hamborough.*

Lancaſhire.

RESUMING, dear Charles, where I broke off in my laſt, I am to tell you, that I embarked one morning at Helvoetſluys, and arrived ſo early the next at Harwich, that I could with the greateſt eaſe lay my account with breakfaſting at Trevil's, whoſe country-houſe lies but three miles out of Harwich on the northern road, juſt in my way as I was directly making my point for Lancaſhire, to my father's place of retirement.

It

It can, I preſume, be no news to you, that by the unexpected dropping of two elder brothers, he is lately come to an eſtate of a good two thouſand a year, beſides a conſiderable ſum in the funds: a windfall, that had raiſed him from the loweſt circumſtances imaginable, which you well know, to eaſe and affluence.

To ſay the truth, I prefigured to myſelf great pleaſure in his being the firſt old acquaintance I ſhould meet with in England, and in embracing him as doubly my brother, both in adverſity and good-fortune. All my pain was, the fear of being ſo overwhelmed with careſſes and civilities, that I ſhould find it difficult to get away with that expedition, which my duty and deſire to ſee my father required.

I proceeded, then, thither in a poſt-chaiſe, being pre-aſſured that he was at his ſeat. Stopping at the door, I ſent up my

my name, and after waiting a good deal longer in the ſervants hall than the urgency of my time would allow, at length down he came to me. I ran to embrace him, expecting to be met with outſtretched arms, when I could not but obſerve, that he rather drew back and flinched from me, keeping his hands behind him, very probably a-croſs, for the ſurer avoiding my ſhaking him by them. He contented himſelf, then, with only making a ſlight inclination of the head, in return for my cordial and friendly ſalutation. But what painter could do juſtice to that face of his? Such a mixture of forbidding reſerve, and majeſtic haughtineſs, as diſtanced every idea of familiar compellation!

This reception immediately ſtruck me with the character of the man, and I was determined to enjoy it, and to give myſelf the ſport of drawing him out to the utmoſt length of my line.

After, then, ſuch a look, and ſuch a how-d'ye, as made me plainly feel the wind was in a cold corner, and my ſometime Pilades's friendſhip at the freezing point, he bid me welcome, with an air that gave him the lie, and ſatisfied me that he wiſhed me at the devil. This gave me my cue; and I had the malice to tell him, I was juſt landed from Holland, where I had been on a certain affair, and being bound to the North, I was come to take a dinner with him.

He told me he was horridly out of luck that he could not have that pleaſure, but that he was indiſpenſably engaged to his neighbour Lord Goſſamer. To Lord Goſſamer! thought I; a wretch, that a man of any taſte or honor would have preferred the penance of walking twenty miles barefoot, to the horror and ſtupidity of a quarter of an hour ſpent with him. I was only ſorry within me

to

to believe, that, on this occaſion, Trevil's excuſe was a lie. Its being true, was what I ſhould have wiſhed for his puniſhment-ſake. As to his pretended engagement, it was certainly no diſappointment to me; who, ſooner than dine with him, after what I had room to think of him, would have ſat down to a meal with the hangman's helper.

He then offered me a diſh of chocolate, but in ſo ſlight a manner, that I was obliged to refuſe it, reſolving to truſt rather to the next ſtage for my breakfaſt.

But what ſhocked me beyond meaſure was, his telling me, with ſuch an air of indifference, mixed with inſult, of a diſtreſs befallen my father by an arreſt, out of which he was, he added, immediately relieved by yours, that I could with great voluptuouſneſs of ſcorn have ſpit in his face. This piece of news changed, how-

ever, my purpoſe of proceeding in a chaiſe, to that of riding poſt, for the ſake of greater ſpeed, and became remotely the cauſe of that fall, of which I am but juſt recovering.

I was by this time, all on fire to be gone, and yet could not reſiſt the temptation of playing off my laſt reſerve of ſport with him. I then put on an humble grave face, and deſired him to lend me twenty guineas, (obſerve, I ſaid to *lend*, not to *pay*, though he owed me at leaſt twice as much, which I had, at times, ſpared out of my poor pittance, to relieve him, in very ugly ſituations.) To this, " my dear friend," (you remember that was the name he uſed to give himſelf to me) anſwered, with a viſage caſe-hardened againſt every impreſſion of ſhame, that he really had no caſh by him, but that if a guinea would be of any ſervice to me, there it was, and

hoped

hoped he ſhould ſee me in town, when he would do me any good office that lay in his power.

I took the guinea, and, to his great ſurpriſe, the window being open, I ſkimmed it out, with a ſmile of the moſt conſummate diſdain: an action for which I aſk pardon of the poor, and vow to them a reparation for the wrong it did them, as it would have been better beſtowed in charity to them, than thrown away, on the imaginary puniſhment of a fellow beneath it. Imaginary I call it, for I dare anſwer that he did not even feel it: or if he did, it was abſorbed in his hugging himſelf on having ſaved the other nineteen.

Upon this, giving him ſuch a look as he deſerved, without ſpeaking a word, I ſpun upon my heel, maſter enough of myſelf not to ſtoop to any explanation

with him, or to ſatisfy him of my having fifty times, at leaſt, the ſum about me, in caſh and notes, requiſite to carry me to my journey's end. His thoughts were too much beneath my conſideration, to throw away one of mine upon what they were, or might be.

On flinging myſelf into the chaiſe, which I was to change at the next ſtage, for poſt horſes, I could not help recollecting your juſter judgment of Trevil, in whom you had always ſeen the raſcal through his hundred folds. You are ſenſible he knew a great deal of what is called the Town; and currently enough paſſed, in the jargon of it, for a deviliſh honeſt fellow. Neither did he want for a ſort of wit; he could tell a ſtory with ſome grace, humor a ballad, and fifty other ſmall qualities, that took with one ſo young and unexperienced as I

was.

was. I never could find in my heart to ſuſpect him of not having one. But above all, his ingratitude was what ſhocked me, which, as one of our poets (Thompſon) juſtly expreſſes it, is "high-"treaſon againſt mankind." He had obligations to my father; he had obligations to me, who, had often watched his wants, that I might have the pleaſure of preventing his application to me, on the fixed principle with me, that he who, knowing a friend's diſtreſs, and having it in his power to relieve him, does not from his own mere motion relieve him, has already in his heart denied him, or if he waits to do it, for his aſking him, he overſells the benefit. You know I have even borrowed money of you to lend him, and, in that, did more for his wants, than I ever did for my own. And this was the retribution.

However, dear Charles, in this confeſſion to you of my defect of judgment, in ſuffering ſuch a wretch to impoſe himſelf on me for a friend, I am glad to make you honorable amends for my having, too crudely, imputed to you too great a ſeverity of opinion, in your contempt of him.

I am alſo really obliged to him for this warning, which will have this good effect, that, in future, I ſhall be more cautious, but not more unwilling to do good offices. I even think myſelf piqued in honor, to atone by ſervices to the worthy, for my folly of having ſo much miſplaced my obligation on ſo ungrateful a monſter. Yet, after all, is he ſuch a monſter, at leaſt, in point of rarity? I am afraid not. I fancy he rather re-repreſents in general the WORLD.

But

But enough, and too much on ſo loathſom a ſubject. I have done with it for ever. And now an indiſpenſable interruption hinders me from going on with my narrative. I refer you then to the next poſt.

Yours &c.

LEONARD SUMNERS.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Mr. LEONARD SUMNERS *to Mr.* CHARLES STANLEY, *Merchant, at Hamborough.*

IN my journey, dear Charles, to the Northward I met with no ſiniſter accident, till, I may ſay, I touched the end of it, when I was flung from my horſe, by a ſudden ſtart, and rather ſorely than dangerouſly hurt. The particulars of it, your worthy father told me he had written to you, as well as of the kind deception employed to conceal from me, for ſome time, my father's death. The repetition here then would be ſuperfluous.

I had

I had been carried, ſtunned and ſenſeleſs, into Mr. Mellefont's, a clergiman of great worth, and goodneſs of character, where all the requiſite aſſiſtence was inſtantly procured for me. As ſoon as I was in a condition to receive the viſits of the family, Mr. Mellefont introduced his wife, attended by her younger ſiſter, Miſs Clara Maynwaring. But when this young lady came to pay me, in her turn, a compliment of condolence on my accident, during which, I could not help looking at her; I own to you that I muſt have made, even in the light of common civility, a moſt contemptible figure; for ſurely the moſt conſummately ill-bred clown could hardly have exhibited a broader ſtare of ſurpriſe and wonder, at any object, than I did, juſt then, at the firſt ſight of this miracle of beauty. It was a blaze that overpowered me: a rapture that kept my eyes motionleſs, and fixt on the divineſt

face that in my life I ever beheld. I could, with pleaſure, have anſwered her by an exclamation: "Angels, are ye, or "are ye not all in Heaven? For ſurely "this is a more than mortal beauty." Perhaps I ſhould actually have broke out into ſome ſuch intemperate ſally of admiration, if I could have articulated my words clearly. I cannot be ſure that what I did ſay was not worſe, for I can ſafely ſwear, that I do not know what I ſaid; nor, I believe, they either; my utterance was ſo confuſed and unintelligible. So much the better. No words could have done juſtice to my ſentiments.

But when I reflected on the combination of the exquiſite beauty of her moſt delicately featured countenance, enlivened with the freſheſt colors, and of the moſt perfect modeled ſhape, with the inchantment of her naturally melodious voice,

voice, now ſtill more ſoftened by that ſtrain of tender pity, which melted on her tongue, and gliſtened in her eyes ſuffuſed with tears, my whole heart was forced to agree to the confeſſion I inwardly made to myſelf, that Clara fulfilled to me the ſublimeſt idea of the power of her ſex to charm, that the human imagination could form. And yet I did not then know half her excellencies: thoſe of her mind were, if poſſible, equal to the perfections of her perſon.

Believe me, dear Charles, there is not a ſillable of exageration in this. If you do me juſtice, you may remember that I am not of the moſt inflammable temper, and have ſeen very great beauties, with very little emotion. To ſay the truth, all the women that I had ever before ſeen, roſe, to my recollection, in no better view, than as the common flowers of the field; while Clara appeared to me

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the perennial roſe to be worn in the boſom. It was reſerved for her goodneſs to rivet the chains in which her beauty had begun to hold me.

It was, then, at ſome of thoſe times which that hoſpitable family might judge hung heavy on my hands, in the courſe of my recovery, that Clara, in her turn, or ſupplementally for her ſiſter, would bleſs me with her company, ſit by me, pity my pains, and ſooth my impatience. It was in thoſe delightful moments that, without affectation, without intention of diſplay, ſhe let me diſcover in her ſo cultivated an underſtanding, ſuch an admirable fund of ſenſe, as defended her good nature from any ſuſpicion of weakneſs, and exalted it into a virtue, which made all the other virtues in her, the more conſpicuous and the more amiable. There was in her ſo graceful a modeſty, ſo ſweet an unpretendingneſs, ſuch

ſuch an unaffected ignorance of the power of her charms, as aſtoniſhed and captivated me. Formed to be one of the greateſt ornaments of ſociety, ſhe ſeemed, nevertheleſs, in her air and converſation, to breathe nothing ſo much as a taſte for the ſhades of retirement, and the ſimplicity of domeſtic life. She was at that very time courted, followed, hard-preſſed, by perſons of the firſt diſtinction and fortune in the country, and declined them all without affecting it, and without, perhaps, herſelf knowing that ſhe was declining them. And yet ſhe did not diſdain to come occaſionally into my ſick-room, and paſs hours without any ſhow of reluctance or diſguſt, granting to pity what ſhe had denied to love. Nor, by any thing that ever eſcaped her to ſay, was I led to conjecture, what I afterwards learnt, by other means, that ſhe had refuſed the moſt advantageous propoſals

poſals on the moſt honorable terms, for no reaſon aſſignable, but that of her not liking the parties enough to liſten to them.

But what had the greateſt power to enſlave me, was the pure diſintereſtedneſs and nobility of ſentiment, which were ſo unſuſpiciouſly ſignaliſed, by her condeſcenſion, her aſſiduity, her care of one like me, in the character of an unfortunate and diſtreſſed perſon. To that very circumſtance it was ſo plain, my owing her redoublement of attention to me, that I never let a hint eſcape me of that change of my fortune, of which, in the delicacy of my love, I abſolutely ſhould have been jealous.

And here let me confeſs a fault, and a great one. The paſſion with which ſhe has inſpired me: —— But hold, do not let me give to ſo virtuous, ſo rational a love as mine, the name of a weakneſs; my

my love produced, however, a weakneſs. It was the cauſe, the undoubted cauſe, that the charms I found in her company, making me forgetful of the paſt, and improvident of the future, in favor of that enjoyment of the preſent, in which I was totally abſorbed, contributed not a little to my meeting more than halfway their innocent deception of me, as to the fate of my poor father; and, though I certainly did not ſuſpect his demiſe, to render me leſs ſolicitous than I ought to have been to procure more circumſtantial intelligence about him. But when were credulity and neglect of duties not the failures of thoſe in my condition? Lovers believe every thing like children, or break through every thing like madmen. I had greedily ſwallowed a groſs enough illuſion, and had omitted ſome very important incumbences, both of filial regard, and of the diſpatch of my affairs, which you will

eaſily think were immediately urgent. But what of all that? I was in love to diſtraction, and thought of nothing but its object.

I was in this ſituation of mind, when your father came down to me, and, with the propereſt preparation, acquainted me of my father's death, and of the motives of tenderneſs from which it had been concealed from me. It was then that love yielded for a moment its empire to the feelings of nature; and I had nearly ſunk under the ſeverity of the ſtroke, but for the abſolute dominion Clara had over me, even without knowing it herſelf. Her conſolations aſſuaged, ſoothed, calmed, my grief, and amidſt all the gloom of it, drew even ſmiles of joy from me, at her entering ſo compaſſionately into it, and eſpecially at her continuance in the miſtake (for I had deſired your father not to mention my circumſtances) of the

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ſtate of my fortune, as it helped to keep up that ſentiment of pity, of which I felt all the advantages to my love, and, let me add, to my delicacy of love.

Another fault of lovers is, that they imagine every one, to whom they relate the progreſs and particulars of their ſucceſs, is as intereſted in it as they are themſelves. Conſcious of this, dear Charles, I will ſpare you all the gradations thro' which I at length arrived at that critical ſtep, a declaration.

I did not make it till I had, be it ſaid without the leaſt tincture of a coxcomb's vanity, prepared my ſucceſs; and perhaps by nothing ſo much as by my real diffidence of it; till, to Clara's honor be it obſerved, it was from my high opinion of her clear ſpirit of candor, that I derived, at length, the neceſſary courage. I flattered myſelf, that I could not be miſtaken in the hopes which her eyes,

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her looks, her tone of voice gave me, of my having led her, by inſenſible degrees, from a ſentiment of pity to a ſentiment of eſteem, and from that to a yet more tender one.

The neceſſity approaching of my removal, on the viſible forwardneſs of my recovery, I had no time to loſe. After, then, taking my reſolution, on the firſt opportunity of Clara's being alone with me, I threw myſelf at her feet, and with all the modeſty of a fear inſeparable from genuine love, laid before her the ſtate of my heart.

Clara, who had not ſuffered me to go on, till ſhe had raiſed me from that ſupplicant poſture, ſeemed to liſten to all I ſaid, without any ſign of anger or diſpleaſure. But when I expected her anſwer, ſhe gave me no other than that of burſting out into tears, and deep ſighs. At this, nothing could equal my ſurpriſe,

priſe, but my pain for having occaſioned any thing like grief, to one for whom I would have laid down a thouſand lives. I appeared, then, as I really was, under the greateſt conſternation and dejection of ſpirit. But I had not long to languiſh under this torturous ſuſpence. As ſoon as Clara had recovered her ſpeech, ſhe deſired me not to be alarmed or hurt at her expreſſion of grief; that the cauſe of it was very far from injurious to me; ſince it was entirely owing, not to the novelty of her receiving declarations, to which it had never coſt her any effort to give a peremptory denial, but that, in her preſent ſituation, her terror, her grief aroſe from the diſpoſition, ſo new to her, of her own mind to liſten to me, at the expence of that liberty of heart, which ſhe had hitherto poſſeſſed, and which ſhe had cheriſhed as her ſupreme bleſſing. —— That, having always thought nothing more diſhonorable than diſſimulation,

tion, ſhe would not now begin to uſe it with one who had inſpired her with ſentiments before unknown to her, and whoſe happineſs was ſecure, if he made it depend on any thing in her power to contribute to it. This anſwer, ſhe added, did not come from her eaſineſs, or weakneſs, but from her judgment, which had decided every thing in my favor.

I had, dear Charles, often heard and red of inſtances of dying of joy; I now do not believe a ſillable of its poſſibility, or I could never have ſurvived the rapture into which this her acceptance of my ſuit threw me. I remained mute with extaſy. No matter. Such a ſilence had more of eloquence in it, than all that I could have had liberty enough of heart to utter. But, O power of Love! O charm of ſentiment! what an increaſe of beauty did you not give to the divine Clara! What a true glory did ſhe not derive

derive from that noble ſuperiority of her's, to the falſe honor of trifling with torture by prolonging ſuſpence. What obligation had I not to her, for all the pain ſhe ſpared me? I was, however, happy enough to make her ſenſible of all the eſteem that my gratitude for this procedure, added to my love; ſhe believed me, nay, readily believed me, and why? Not, I aſſure you, from any weakneſs of prepoſſeſſion in my favor, but becauſe I was ſincere in all I ſaid; and becauſe truths from the heart are irreſiſtible.

For the firſt time, then, I ventured to ſnatch her hand, and imprint on it a kiſs, burning with the fervor of the pureſt ſentiment; and ſhe was rather ſtruggling to withdraw it, when all on a ſudden, Mr. Mellefont, followed by Mrs. Mellefont, came into the room, and ſurprized us, moſt certainly, without any deſign to ſurpriſe

ſurpriſe us, and merely to bring Clara a letter juſt received by the poſt, and which they knew by the ſuperſcription to be from their aunt, one Mrs. Buckley.

I cannot ſay but I was ſomewhat hurt and confounded at their interruption of us, juſt at that critical juncture. But on a moment's reflection, recollecting myſelf, and before Clara could take the letter out of his hand, I addreſſed myſelf to Mr. Mellefont; and with an air of as little preſumption, as if my fortune had been in no better a condition than what appearances placed it, I made the overture to him of my honorable pretentions to his ſiſter. To do him but juſtice, he heard me with great politeneſs and reſpect, without anſwering a word, till fixing his eyes on Clara, who modeſtly dejected her's, and reading in her looks that this my application was not unauthoriſed by her conſent; he told me, with

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the beſt grace imaginable, that Clara's diſpoſal of herſelf was intirely in her own power; that, nevertheleſs, if his opinion was of any weight with either, he did not wiſh to with-hold it: that from his whole ſoul he ratified her choice with the higheſt approbation, ſo far as what he was pleaſed to call my perſonal merit, was concerned; but that with as clear a contempt for mere reſpects of intereſt, as the ſpirit of his profeſſion, ſuperior to that wordly conſideration could require, he was only afraid that the mediocrity of Clara's fortune might not ſuffize, ſo young as we were, for ſupporting the appearance his regard for us made him wiſh we ſhould make; and that eſpecially he was apprehenſive of its throwing an obſtacle in my way to the puſhing my advancement, and to the bettering my circumſtances.

(At this laſt hint I gave a ſmile, for which, I dare ſwear, they were all of

them, Clara included, at a loſs to account.) He then went on with remonſtrances drawn from the worthieſt friendſhip, and the tendereſt eſteem for both of us, and concluded with obſerving, that he had not been in the leaſt, in all he had ſaid, meaning to refuſe his concurrence to our determination, and that a reaſon was not a denial; as he would prove to us, by the alacrity with which he would acquit himſelf of the function of his office, in uniting us.

Upon this he gave his aunt's letter to Clara, who, in the ſtile of politeneſs, aſking me leave to read it, withdrew towards the window. Mr. Mellefont and his wife remained with me, aſſuring me, very obligingly, that they were neither ſorry nor ſurpriſed at this event, which they had anticipated by what they had obſerved of us both. We were, then, inſenſibly ſliding into a perfect good under-

underſtanding, when Clara called to them both, and deſired them to join with her in the re-peruſal of his aunt's letter to her. I kept, in the mean while, at a little diſtance; while preſently Mr. Mellefont ran to me, and taking me by the hand, told me, that certain points in that letter had greatly removed his objection, which, however, had never been a very violent one, to the incompetency of Clara's fortune for the happineſs of both. At this I ſtared a little at him, and looking at Clara, who had followed him, I thought I obſerved her eyes ſparkle with joy, which I afterwards found was owing to the ſhare ſhe took in the ſatisfaction of a certain Lady Harriet, of whom ſhe had often ſpoken to me, without ever mentioning the ſacrifice ſhe had made of Lord Soberton's offers, to the truth of her friendſhip for her, and to her own ſtrict ideas of honor.

As to the acceſſions to her fortune, mentioned in that letter, they were rather, it ſeems, matter of doubt with her as to the point of her accepting them, than of exultation. This doubt I was happily enabled ſoon to diſſipate.

It was now high time for me, after my being thus nobly, indeed, convinced of the diſintereſtedneſs and purity of ſentiments of this worthy family, to declare myſelf, and to leave not a ſhadow of ſcruple about my circumſtances, which I had hitherto, with ſuch an honorable intention, leſs myſelf diſſembled, than I had ſuffered the appearances of them to ſubſiſt. After a proper preface, I laid open to them the real ſituation of my fortune, which could not but be ſuperior to their moſt ſanguine imaginations; and I laid it open with that true and unaffected indifference to it, which became one that had never entertained a thought

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of being obliged to it for any recommendation. And let me do juſtice to that clear-ſpirited family, and to Clara eſpecially: I did not find that the diſcovery affected them much, or her, in the leaſt, with any delight. On the contrary, I had reaſon to think myſelf happy, that it did not do me a prejudice in her opinion; for nothing could be more certain, than that the preſumed diſtreſs of my circumſtances had not a little contributed to my winning her, by the ſentiment of pity, which they had excited. In ſhort, ſhe barely forgave my not being ſo unfortunate as I had appeared.

However, all being now referred to myſelf, as to the acceptance of thoſe offers contained in Mrs. Buckley's letters relating to Clara, I acquieſced in her receiving ſome jewels deſigned her for a wedding-preſent by Lady Harriet, on the footing of friendſhip, becauſe I pro-

poſed to contrive ſome return of twice the value. But the money which was to accompany them, Clara will abſolutely refuſe, with all the politeneſs due to the goodneſs of heart from which it is offered.

As to the donation of a ſmall eſtate, in Lady Harriet's name, but which came originally from Lord Soberton, my delicacy would not allow of her having ſuch an obligation to any one but myſelf, though ſurely the motive of the donation, does immortal honor to Clara's virtue and greatneſs of ſoul. Mr. Mellefont takes it upon him to give a proper color and ſoftening to this refuſal; as well as to that of a living, very nobly offered him by the Marqueſs, but which his delicacy will not ſuffer him to accept, for reaſons I cannot but highly approve; and, indeed, rejoice at, conſidering how much it is in my power and inclination

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to make him ample amends for the ſelf-denial.

Every thing, then, dear Charles, is ſettled perfectly to my deſire. I only wait now the time that decency requires, for the celebration of the nuptials that will make me the happieſt of mankind. I lay my account with my being fully recovered by then, and hope I may depend on your ſpeedy return to this country, for more reaſons than one, but for none ſo ſtrong as that of friendſhip, and of my deſire of gratefully proving mine to you, now it is in my power.

Yours, &c.

LEONARD SUMNERS.

LETTER XXXIX.

Extract of a Letter from Mr. MELLEFONT *to Mrs.* BUCKLEY.

Lancaſhire.

—— THIS very day I have had the exquiſite pleaſure of doing the office of uniting the moſt amiable pair that I know in the world; the thoroughly recovered Mr. Sumners to Clara Maynwaring, under the united auſpices of Love and Honor.

EDWARD MELLEFONT.

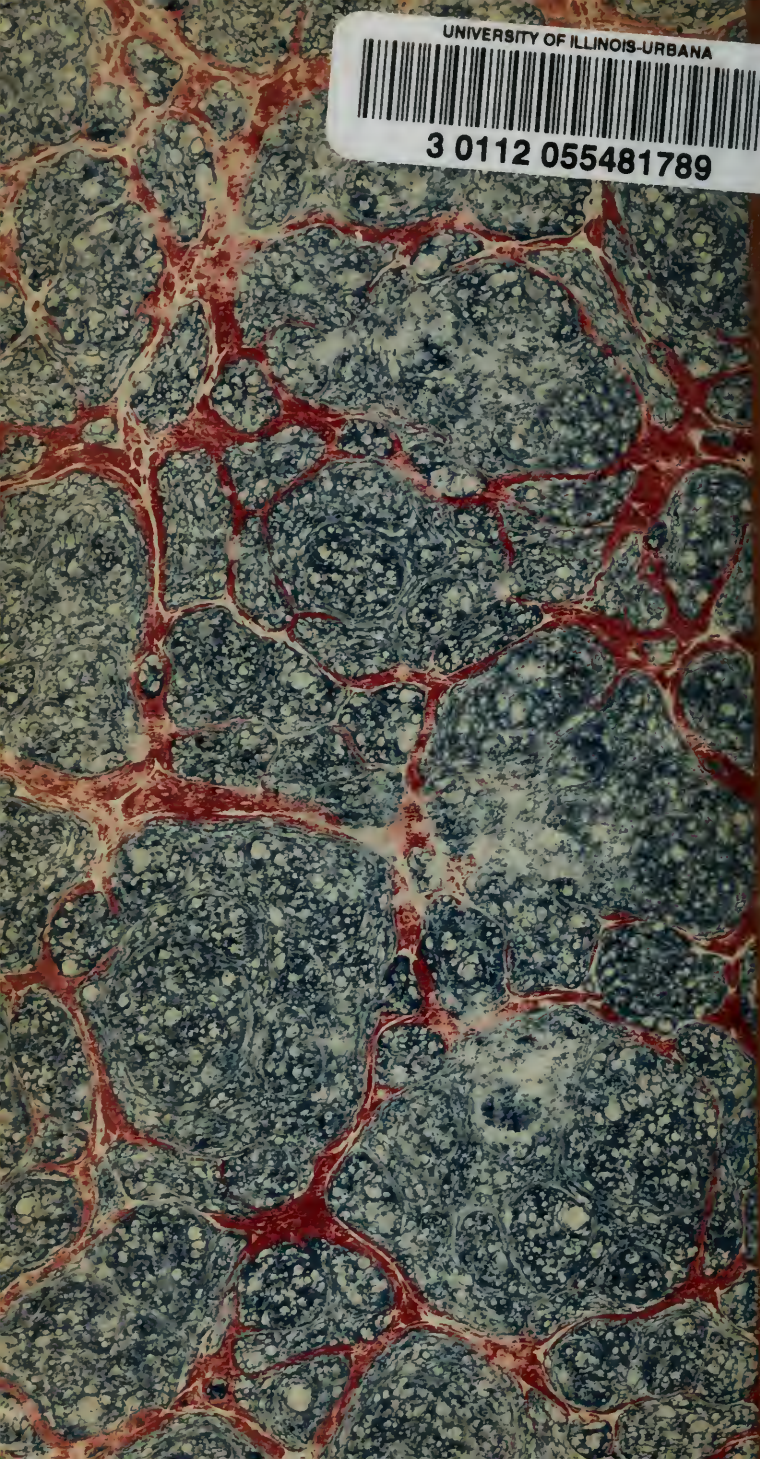
ERRATA. Vol. III.

Page 22. *l.* 17. *For* ſtate-watch-word, *read* ſtale watch-word.

54. *l.* 2. *For* on truth, *read* in truth.

90. *l.* 7. *For* loathſom horror, *read* length of loathſom horror.

135. *l.* 5. *For* unimadvert, *read* animadvert.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